

Marvel and Artefact

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Marvel and Artefact

The ‘Wonders of the East’ in Its Manuscript Contexts

By

A.J. Ford



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Cover illustration: Detail of Figure 23. London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 86v.

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for Carol, *uxor pacientissima*

intrans in domum meam conquiescam cum illa
non enim habet amaritudinem conversatio illius
nec taedium convictus ipsius
sed laetitiam et gaudium

LIBER SAPIENTIAE, VIII. 16

&

i.m. Leonard Goldstein, 1922–2012

Contents

Acknowledgements	xii
List of Figures and Tables	xiii
List of Abbreviations	xv
1 'The Manifold Uses of Things'	
<i>The Early Medieval Book as Artefact</i>	1
2 The Wonders of the East and the Learned Tradition of Marvels	6
Introduction	6
A Brief Overview of the Learned Tradition	8
The 'Wonders of the East' and the 'Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian'	12
3 The Wonders in a Manuscript of Unknown Origin	
<i>London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A. xv</i>	16
Introduction	16
Illustration	18
<i>Homodubii</i>	19
<i>Cynocephali and Donestre</i>	25
<i>Other Similarities</i>	28
<i>Conclusion</i>	31
Palaeography	35
<i>Anglo-Saxon Square Minuscule: Scribe 2</i>	40
<i>Style-I English Vernacular Minuscule: Scribe 1</i>	43
<i>The Significance of Distinct Scripts in Vitellius A. xv</i>	44
Codicology	48
<i>The Consensus Quires</i>	48
<i>The Contested Quires</i>	52
The 'Wonders' in Vitellius A. xv: 'Speaking Beyond the Light'	56
4 The Wonders and the <i>Computus</i> Manuscript	
<i>London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. v</i>	60
Introduction	60
The Origin and Audience of Tiberius B. v	62
Reading Books and the Monastic Library	65
The Materiality of Tiberius B. v	67

Page Design in Tiberius B. v	70
<i>The 'Wonders of the East'</i>	70
<i>The Calendar</i>	73
Tiberius B. v: The Semiotics of the 'Computus' Manuscript	83
The 'Wonders of the East' as Semiotic	89
<i>The Land of Vineyards and the Ivory Couch</i>	91
<i>The Mountain of Adamant and the Griffin</i>	93
<i>The Phoenix and Its Nest of Cinnamon</i>	96
<i>The Unnamed Fiery Mountain and Its Black Inhabitants</i>	98
<i>Jamnes and Mambres</i>	100
Conclusion	101
5 The Wonders and the Schools	
<i>Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614</i>	103
Introduction	103
The Problem of Dating Bodley 614	104
<i>Codicological Considerations</i>	105
<i>Art-Historical Considerations</i>	106
<i>Palaeographical Considerations</i>	107
<i>Textual Considerations</i>	110
<i>Summary</i>	110
The Origin and Sources of Bodley 614	111
<i>A Palaeographical Comparandum?</i>	112
<i>The Calendar</i>	113
<i>The Additions from William of Conches's 'De philosophia mundi'</i>	116
<i>De miraculis beati Thomae apostoli</i>	118
<i>St Urri and the Folklore of Megalithic Monuments</i>	119
<i>Evidence Concerning 'Opusculum de ratione spere'</i>	121
<i>Summary</i>	126
The Social Relations of the 'Twelfth-Century Renaissance'	128
Bodley 614 and the Practice of the Schools	133
<i>Selection and Compilation</i>	133
<i>Self-Aware Commentary</i>	134
<i>An Illustrative Tradition</i>	134
The Mythographic Mode	135
<i>The Fighting Brothers</i>	138
<i>The Dancing Women</i>	139
Conclusion	142

6 The Materiality of Marvels	143
Postscript	147
Appendix: Summary Descriptions of the <i>Wonders</i> Manuscripts	149
Bibliography	157
Index of Subjects	174
Index of Ancient and Medieval Authors and Texts	177

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St Edmund's Day 2014

The Parish of the Holy Saviour, Sugley

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

- 1 *Homodubius*. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 102v 20
- 2 Mermaid (*Physiologus A*). MS 673a I, 4°, fol. iv; from Dahlerup's lithograph 22
- 3 Onocentaur (*Physiologus B*). MS 673a II, 4°, fol. 4r; from Dahlerup's lithograph 23
- 4 Aycliffe 2 (s. x²) 24
- 5 *Donestre*. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 103v 25
- 6 Plinean races (*Physiologus A*). MS 673a I, 4°, fol. 2r; from Dahlerup's lithograph 26
- 7 Serpents with shining eyes and *Corsiae*. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 99v 29
- 8 Salamander (*Physiologus B*). MS 673a II, 4°, fol. 3v; from Dahlerup's lithograph 30
- 9 Kirkby Stephen 1 (s. x) 32
- 10 London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 175v 36
- 11 Asser, *Aelfredi regis res gestae*, ed. Matthew Parker (London, 1574), sig. B2r & p. 1 38
- 12 Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 181r 42
- 13 Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 183r/18 43
- 14 Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 198v/20 43
- 15 Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 202v/18 & 19 44
- 16 Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 196r/10 44
- 17 Scribe 1. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 164v 45
- 18 Cambridge, Trinity College R. 5. 22, fol. 110v 47
- 19A London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 5v 74
- 19B London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 6r 75
- 20A London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 3v 76
- 20B London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 4r 77
- 21A London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 4v 78
- 21B London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 5r 79
- 22 Schematised layouts of the Cotton Julius A. vi and Cotton Tiberius B. v calendars 80
- 23 London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 86v 97
- 24 London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 87v 99
- 25 London, BL, Cotton Nero D. ii, fol. 241r (detail) 114
- 26 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 23v (detail) and London, BL, Cotton Nero D. ii, fol. 241r (detail; s.a. 1170-1171) 115

- 27 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fols. 21v and 22r 122
28 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 83, fols. 58r-59r 123
29 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 22v (detail); and Bodleian Library,
Digby 83, fol. 33r (detail) 124
30 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 83, fol. 52r (detail) 124
31 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 34r 125
32 Stemma. *Opusculum de ratione spere* 126
33A Baldishol Tapestry 137
33B Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 49v (detail) 137
34 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 51v (detail) 141

Table

- 1 Collations of London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fols. 94-209 50

List of Abbreviations

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers (Westminster, MD)
AHMA	<i>Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge</i>
AntJ	<i>Antiquaries Journal</i>
ArchJ	<i>Archaeological Journal</i>
AS	Anglo-Saxon
ASE	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
ASNSL	<i>Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen</i>
ASPR	<i>Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records</i> , ed. G.P. Krapp and E.V.K. Dobbie, 6 vols. (New York, 1931–1942)
B&BM	Kevin S. Kiernan, ‘Beowulf’ and the ‘Beowulf’ Manuscript, rev. ed. (Ann Arbor, MI, 1996)
BKP	Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie (Meisenheim am Glan)
BL	British Library
BSGRT	Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnhout)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnhout)
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum (Vienna)
CSMLT	Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought
EEMF	Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile (Copenhagen)
EETS OS	Early English Text Society, original series
EETS SS	Early English Text Society, supplementary series
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
ELN	<i>English Language Notes</i>
EMS	<i>English Manuscript Studies</i>
ES	<i>English Studies</i>
HBS	Henry Bradshaw Society Publications
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
MÆ	<i>Medium Ævum</i>
MLR	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
OE	Old English
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
OMT	Oxford Medieval Texts
ON	Old Norse
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne <i>et al.</i> , 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–1904)
RES	<i>Review of English Studies</i>

RWCS	Records of Western Civilisation Series (New York, NY)
RS	Rolls Series
S	P.H. Sawyer, <i>Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography</i> , R. Hist. Soc. Guides and Handbooks 8 (London, 1968)
SCBO	Scriptorum classicorum bibliotheca Oxoniensis
SMIBI	Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles (London)
STC ²	A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, <i>A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640</i> , 2nd ed., 3 vols. (London, 1976–1991)
TCBS	<i>Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society</i>
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
UL	University Library

'The Manifold Uses of Things'

The Early Medieval Book as Artefact

Every useful thing is a whole composed of many properties; it can therefore be useful in various ways. The discovery of these ways and hence the manifold uses of things is the work of history. K. MARX¹

The theory of strictly economic practice is simply a particular case of a general theory of the economics of practice. The only way to escape from the ethnocentric naiveties of economism, without falling in to popularist exaltation of the generous naivety of earlier forms of society, is to carry out in full what economism does only partially, and to extend economic calculation to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation... P. BOURDIEU²

Forget that commodities are good for eating, clothing, and shelter; forget their usefulness and try instead the idea that commodities are good for thinking; treat them as a non-verbal medium for the human creative faculty. M. DOUGLAS AND B. ISHERWOOD³

Say it, no ideas but in things W.C. WILLIAMS⁴

This book is a study of three medieval English manuscripts as artefacts. Its contention and premise is that an analysis of the whole codex – text, images, palaeography and codicology – opens a vista on medieval culture that may not be seen when these elements are studied individually. The assumptions are essentially Marxist and historical materialist but, because of its attentiveness to the *materiality* of these manuscripts – i.e. their construction as objects by the historical subjects which made and used them – it will not satisfy Marxists who are concerned strictly with the larger historical problems of the period. It is

¹ K. Marx, *Capital: a Critique of Political Economy*, trans. B. Fowkes and D. Fernbach; intro. E. Mandel, 3 vols. (Harmondsworth and London, 1976–1981) I, 125.

² P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge Stud. in Social Anthropology 16 (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 177–178.

³ M. Douglas and B. Isherwood, *The World of Goods: towards an Anthropology of Consumption* (London, 1979), p. 62.

⁴ W.C. Williams, *Paterno*, rev. ed. prepared by C. MacGowan (New York, NY, 1995), p. 6.

hoped, however, that the methodological emphasis on materiality guards against the reductive elements sometimes present in historical-materialist analyses and which, to some degree, every interdisciplinary study risks.

The manuscripts in question range in date from around the millennium to the middle of the twelfth century. The text which identifies them as a group is now generally known to scholars as the *Wonders of the East*, sometimes as the *Marvels of the East* and, occasionally, in order to distinguish the Latin text from its Old English translation, as *De rebus in oriente mirabilibus* or, simply, *Mirabilia*. The earliest volume is London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fols. 94–209 (s. x/xi). It is of unknown origin and the first witness to the Old English text. It is a reasonable hypothesis that the second manuscript - London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, part 1 (s. xi^{2/4}) - was produced at the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury.⁵ Tiberius B. v preserves a bilingual Latin/Old English text. The final volume is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614 (s. xii^{med}). The text of this last manuscript is entirely in Latin.

The great majority of scholarly writing on medieval manuscript books has concerned itself with either description (codicological, art historical, palaeographical) or with textual criticism. Although critical theory, usefully and rigorously applied or not, is fashionable in medieval studies, the same fashion has not spread to the sub-discipline of manuscript studies or, for that matter, to book history more generally. Perhaps it is because books, and the competent use of books, regulate participation in scholarly discourse that we are disinclined to theorize them as artefacts or commodities. Let me pursue this by analogy. Books are to academics what mobile phones are to those under the age of twenty: unquestionably the way life is practised, its assumptions and habits, would be impossible without them. The pervasiveness of the mobile phone within half a generation is very visible to those who recall a time when it was not so, yet is unnoticed by those who cannot. Of course, this analogy is imperfect. Books and scholarship have a much longer history and scholars are quite capable of conceiving of a time when there were neither. But imagine a group of teenagers texting or Facebooking or photographing their friends. If we asked them, they might think that their life with a smart-phone is, telephonically, like that of a City trader in the 1980s with a phone the size of a brick. They would be wrong. There are similarities, of course, and these are what we notice first: both are handheld, both are wireless. But it is the dissimilarities - of function, of signification, of the effects upon the user, of their potential to create social capital unrelated to their use or exchange value, in

⁵ D.N. Dumville, 'The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *ASE* 5 (1976), 23–50, at 46.

short, their *materiality* – that require investigation.⁶ If this is the case with the humble telephone, how much more do manuscript books require that we remain attentive to the nuance of each dissimilar codex?

To pursue this analogy almost *ad absurdum*, just as the mobile phone can be understood both as an object and as something constitutive of social reality, so may medieval manuscripts. To be sure, there is no comparison between manuscript books and mobile phones in terms of social penetration but nevertheless both constitute an integral part of the *habitus* of their users. To borrow a sentence from Webb Keane, an American anthropologist, my intention in this book is to discuss three manuscripts in order to ‘open up...the historicity and social power of material things without reducing them either to being only vehicles of meaning, on the one hand, or ultimate determinants, on the other’.⁷ This ‘opening up’ is accomplished by attention to the object, as far as is possible, with regard for its historical and material specificity. Such attention is precisely the process by which authoritative but vague generalities – that the Book of Hours was a medieval ‘bestseller’, or that ‘in the popular culture of medieval England’ books represented ‘sanctity’⁸ – may be avoided.

It should first be noted that *habitus* may not be equated simply with habitat. It is not things *per se*, but is rather practices and processes which reproduce social relations and their attendant material conditions (constituted *in* things). In the words of Pierre Bourdieu:

The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (e.g. the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition) produce *habitus*, systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations

⁶ For example, a recent study shows how mobile phones are used to build social capital in Jamaica. See H. Horst and D. Miller, *The Cell Phone: an Anthropology of Communication* (Oxford, 2006).

⁷ W. Keane, ‘Semiotics and the Social Analysis of Material Things’, *Lang. and Communication* 23 (2003), 409–425 (at 411). Keane covers similar ground in ‘Signs are Not the Garb of Meaning: on the Social Analysis of Material Things,’ in *Materiality*, ed. D. Miller (Durham, NC, 2005), pp. 182–205.

⁸ A 1997 exhibition at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, was given the name ‘Medieval Bestseller: the Book of Hours’. The catalogue makes the same claim with its opening sentence. See R.S. Wieck, *Painted Prayers: the Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York, NY, 1997), p. 9. For the second claim, see C. de Hamel, ‘Books and Society’, *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Vol. II, 100–1400*, ed. N. Morgan and R.M. Thomson (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 3–21 (at 20).

which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor.⁹

Thus *habitus* is the ‘product of the work of inculcation and appropriation’ necessary for ‘objective structures...to succeed in reproducing themselves more or less completely...’¹⁰ To assert that manuscript books (or mobile phones) are an element in the *habitus* of their owners or users is to understand them as artefacts that stimulate the ‘regulated improvisations’ that ensure cultural reproduction and which are always, in part, an answer to other ‘regulated improvisations’ responding to other stimuli.¹¹

Similarly the term ‘materiality’ means more than its dictionary definition, ‘the quality of being composed of matter’. It is simultaneously an artefact’s object-status and the residues of meaning it collects (or sheds) over time. To stay with the telephone analogy, a Trimphone signified modernity in the UK in the 1960s and was kept up to date in the 70s when the dial was replaced by a keypad. But now a Trimphone is just one in a long line of devices in the cycle from presentness, to outmodedness, then to kitsch, ‘vintage’ (as Bakelite or candlestick telephones are now) and, eventually, redundancy. None of these meanings inhere in the artefact or are in any way an effect of its intended function (i.e. telephony).

In the same way, the materiality of a manuscript may be perceived in the social activities that surround it: when a book is given as a gift or a manumission added to a Gospel; when that same Gospel book is offered for veneration on an altar, in procession (or inside a display case) – or when a volume is considered valuable enough to ransom from thieves.¹² It is there in the difference recorded by Bede between Irish and English books - scrapings from the former are good to cure snakebites when drunk in a water solution¹³ - or when a manuscript is interred at burials like the Coptic ‘Pillow Psalter’ or the gospel book

⁹ Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 72; italics in original.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 85.

¹¹ Again, the phrase is Bourdieu’s (*ibid.*, p. 78).

¹² Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, A. 135 (s. viii^{med}). See below, p. 63.

¹³ *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, OMT (Oxford, 1969), p. 20.

found in St Cuthbert's coffin in 1104.¹⁴ It can be heard in the buzz surrounding a rare sale or in publicity to market a new manuscript digitization. It is palpable when the 'Lindisfarne Gospels' or the 'Book of Kells' are given a starring role in the culture industry with all the associated gift-shop paraphernalia.¹⁵

Habitus and materiality, then, are the concepts that underpin this study of three manuscripts as artefacts. The first volume, Vitellius A. xv, is a codex about whose origin nothing is known. For this reason the discussion proceeds in terms of its 'present' rather than 'historic' materiality; that is to say, the art, palaeography and codicology of Cotton Vitellius A. xv are read through the residue of meaning the volume acquired as a foundational artefact for Anglo-Saxon studies. The second volume - Cotton Tiberius B. v - is read in the context of Christ Church, Canterbury, in the years following the Viking raid of 1011, the product of a community recovering from violence. Up to this point, the third manuscript has been one of the many anonymous manuscripts of the medieval period. Building on the work of Paul Allen Gibb, I offer a palaeographical *comparandum* which suggests that Bodley 614 might be assigned to the Abbey of St Martin, Battle (Sussex), and the date of production refined to s. xii^{med.}¹⁶ This small volume is read in view of the practice of the twelfth-century schools and particularly their attention to mythography.

The text that links these three disparate manuscripts is, of course, the *Wonders of the East*. This book might be open to the criticism that it is focused less on the *Wonders* than on the manuscripts that preserve it. But, I insist, the *Wonders* is not just a scholarly McGuffin. The *Wonders* is more than a text that makes it possible, by comparison and contrast, to read these manuscripts as artefacts. The *Wonders* is a text that makes marvels real through a material object - in every material text and image. As such, its ambiguities, its successes and failures, provide a metaphor for our relationship to the material world and the artefacts we employ. By reading the *Wonders of the East* in the context of the manuscripts that preserve it, we are able to discover (in part, at least) some of the multiple uses of things which - as Marx puts it - is the work of history.

¹⁴ Cairo, Coptic Museum Manuscripts Library, 6614 (s. iv^{ex/vⁱⁿ}); London, BL, Add. 89000 (c. 698; *olim* BL, Loan 74). On these see M.P. Brown, ed., *In the Beginning: Bibles Before the Year 1000* (Washington, DC, 2006), pp. 74–75.

¹⁵ London, BL, Cotton Nero D. iv (s.vii^{ex/viiiⁱⁿ}); Dublin, Trinity College 58 (c. 800).

¹⁶ P.A. Gibb, 'Wonders of the East: a Critical Edition and Commentary' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Duke Univ., 1977).

The *Wonders of the East* and the Learned Tradition of Marvels

Introduction

The *Wonders of the East* is an attractive text but it is not a major literary achievement. Its short, descriptive sketches of monsters and marvels intrigue and disconcert, appealing as much to a reader's curiosity as to dread. But as much as it is attractive, the crudeness of its form and its rather unsophisticated tone means that reading the *Wonders* can be a confounding experience. But when the text is seen in its manuscript contexts and, in turn, those manuscripts are read as artefacts, the significance of the *Wonders* begins to exceed what we might expect from this rather eccentric and peripheral text.¹ This chapter prepares the way for that discussion by tracing the learned tradition concerning marvels on which the *Wonders* draws. It then traces the complex relations between the *Wonders of the East* and the different recensions of its parent text, the *Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian*.

The *Wonders of the East* is preserved, with accompanying illustrations, in three well-known but very different manuscripts. The earliest manuscript, London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fols. 94–209 (s. x/xi), presents the *Wonders* alongside four other vernacular texts (the *Life of St Christopher*, the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, *Beowulf*, and *Judith*). The *Wonders* is the only item illuminated in this manuscript. The images in Vitellius A. xv differ both in conception and execution from those in the next surviving example of the *Wonders*, London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, part 1 (s. xi^{2/4}). Tiberius is a grand *computus* manuscript that includes, along with *compustica*, maps and genealogies, texts by Ælfric, Cicero and Priscian. In this company, *Mirabilia* and the *Wonders* are presented together in a bi-lingual text. The final manuscript to contain the *Wonders* is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614 (s. xii^{med}). Bodley 614 is a compact little volume, most likely for personal use, in which *Mirabilia* is presented alongside a calendar and astronomical material taken from *Opusculum de*

¹ For convenience the title *Wonders of the East* is used to refer to both the Old English and the Latin versions. When it is necessary to distinguish between the Latin text and the vernacular, I refer to the Old English *Wonders* and the Latin *Mirabilia*.

*ratione spere.*² Using Andy Orchard's numbering, we may count thirty-two marvels in Vitellius A. xv. To these, Tiberius B. v adds five; in its turn, Bodley 614 adds a further twelve.³ So the *Wonders of the East* survives not just in two languages but in a different recension in each manuscript. The textual tradition of both the vernacular *Wonders* and *Mirabilia*, and of the larger textual family of which they are just one part, was quite fluid.

This extended family descends from a pseudonymous text now known as the *Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian*.⁴ The *Letter* is extant in various Latin versions and two vernacular translations – one into Old French, the other the Old English *Wonders* – but it ‘probably appeared first in Greek’.⁵ Concerning the earliest history of the *Letter* there is little evidence but Knock suggests the Greek version was written ‘probably towards the end of the second century’:

All the texts appear to derive from a single translation into Latin. This Latin translation was certainly available by the end of the seventh century and probably much earlier...because of the number of stages of transmission necessary for the development of two groups of texts and so

2 For summary descriptions, see Appendix. For facsimiles, see: *The Nowell Codex: British Museum Cotton Vitellius A. xv, Second ms*, ed. K. Malone, EEMF 12 (Copenhagen, 1963); P. McGurk, D.N. Dumville, M.R. Godden and A. Knock, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library Cotton Tiberius B. v, Part 1, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Nero D. II*, EEMF 21 (Copenhagen, 1983); *Electronic Beowulf*, ed. K. Kiernan; programmed by I.E. Iacob, 3rd ed. (London, 2011) [1 DVD]; M.R. James, *Marvels of the East: a Full Reproduction of the Three Known Copies, with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford, 1929). The calendar of Bodley 614 has not been published in facsimile but the astronomical portion (fols. 17–35) is reproduced in D. Blume, M. Haffner and W. Metzger, *Sternbilder des Mittelalters: Der gemalte Himmel zwischen Wissenschaft und Phantasie. Band I, 800–1200*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 2012) II, 251–260. See also the images available via the *Oxford Digital Library*, <<http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/>>.

3 A. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the ‘Beowulf’-Manuscript*, rev. ed. (Toronto, 2003), pp. 18–22.

4 The standard edition is C. Lecouteux, ed., *De rebus in Oriente mirabilibus (Lettre de Farasmanes)*, BKP 103 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1979). A translation can be found in R. Stoneman, *Legends of Alexander the Great* (London, 2012), pp. 20–24.

5 D.J.A. Ross, *Alexander Historiatus*, Warburg Institute Surveys 1 (London, 1963), p. 32. A summary of the textual and manuscript tradition is found in Ann Knock's contribution to McGurk et al., *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, pp. 88–95. For a more detailed discussion see her ‘Wonders of the East: a Synoptic Edition of *The Letter of Pharasmenes* and the Old English and Old Picard Translations’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of London, 1982) and especially pp. 25–37 for a discussion of original language of composition and the date of the first Latin translation.

many individual variants. This development into two distinct groups was complete by the date of the earliest extant MSS, the late eighth or early ninth century.⁶

Taking her cue from the variant spellings of Pharasmenes's name in the incipits, Knock calls them the Fermes and Premonis groups.⁷ A text from the Premonis group was known early in Anglo-Saxon England, as the compiler of the *Liber monstrorum* had one to draw from some time in the century after 650.⁸ Once it had arrived, however, the P-group had lasting influence because both *Mirabilia* and the vernacular translation 'produced during Alfred's time or not long afterwards' belong to it.⁹ Before considering the text in more detail, however, it is necessary to look briefly at the learned tradition of which it is a part.

A Brief Overview of the Learned Tradition

The learned tradition concerning the wondrous races of the East was first outlined by Rudolph Wittkower in a classic article of 1942.¹⁰ The earliest sources are two Greek descriptions of India, called *Indika*, that survive in the work of later writers. The earliest was written by Ctesias, a physician at the Persian court in the late fifth century BC. It survives in a ninth-century abridgement by Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople (c. 820–c. 891).¹¹ On Ctesias's account,

⁶ Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', pp. 36–37.

⁷ McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, pp. 88–89. See also P.A. Gibb, 'Wonders of the East: a Critical Edition and Commentary' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Duke Univ., 1977), pp. 200–211.

⁸ Various suggestions have been made for the origin of the *Liber monstrorum*. For two different views, see M. Lapidge, 'Beowulf, Aldhelm, the *Liber monstrorum* and Wessex', *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600–899* (London and Rio Grande, OH, 1996), pp. 271–312 and A. Knock, 'The *Liber monstrorum*: an Unpublished Manuscript and some Reconsiderations', *Scriptorium* 32 (1978), 19–28; and 'Synoptic Edition', pp. 337–350.

⁹ A. Knock, 'Analysis of a Translator: the Old English *Wonders of the East*', *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately on the Occasion of her Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. J. Roberts and J.L. Nelson with M. Godden (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 121–126 (at 122).

¹⁰ R. Wittkower, 'Marvels of the East: a Study in the History of Monsters', *Jnl of the Warburg and Courtauld Inst.* 5 (1942), 159–197. See also J. B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse, NY, 2000) and M.R. James's introduction to his facsimile volume (n. 2 above). What follows here is largely a restatement of their work.

¹¹ A. Nichols, trans., *Ctesias on India and Fragments of his Minor Works* (London, 2011).

India contained unusual animals – parrots and elephants, for example – but also fantastic ones: dogs large enough to take on lions, the manticore and the griffin. It had springs, rivers and stones with miraculous properties. Populating this landscape were equally marvellous races, including the dog-headed *Cynocephali*; a people that drink only milk; and the *Pandae*, a race born with white hair all over that darkens until it is completely black.

The second source is Megasthenes (c. 350–290 BC), a diplomat sent by Seleucus I to the court of Chandragupta in India. The greater part of his *Indika* survives in Arrian (c. AD 86–160) but other writers preserve fragments too.¹² Megasthenes wrote when interest in India and Eastern lore had been piqued by Alexander the Great's conquest of the same in 326 BC. Although criticism did not displace them as authorities, the fabulous reports of these authors were not always received positively: Strabo (c. 64 BC–after AD 21), Lucian (AD c. 120–c. 180 AD), and Aulus Gallus (AD c. 125–after 180) dismissed the marvellous accounts of the earlier Greek writers as fables.¹³

The Greek tradition was largely unknown to the early medieval world. It inherited the Latin tradition, for which the first authority on wonders was the *Historia naturalis* of Pliny the Elder (AD 23/4–79). In combination with Pomponius Mela's *De chorographia* (written c. AD 40), Pliny's work was used by Solinus as the source for his *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, also known as *Polyhistor*, composed soon after AD 200.¹⁴ Solinus's account of monsters in the *Collectanea* was used by Isidore of Seville (d. 636) in the *Etymologiae* and, in turn, Isidore's account was reproduced by Hrabanus Maurus in *De universo* (written c. 844). Later Scholastic writers also included monsters and marvels in their encyclopaedias: Honorius Augustodinensis (fl. 1098–1140) in his *Imago mundi*; Gervase of Tilbury (d. after 1222) in *Otia imperialia*; Vincent of Beauvais (c. 1190–1264) in the *Speculum naturale*; Thomas of Cantimpré (1201–1272) in *Liber de natura*

¹² The standard edition is F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, 3 vols. in 15 (Berlin, 1923–1958), no. 715. Brill's New Jacoby [BNJ 715 T 2b] provides the text and English translation, <<http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/>>.

¹³ Strabo, *Geographica*, II.i.9; Lucian, pref. to *Verae historiae*, I.iii; Aulus Gellus, *Noctes Atticae*, IX.iv.

¹⁴ There are no complete copies of *Historia naturalis* surviving from Anglo-Saxon England. Four manuscripts contain excerpts: London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v; BL, Harley 647 (Lotharingia, s. ix^{2/4}; provenance St Augustine's, Canterbury); BL Harley 2506 (Fleury, s. x/xi; provenance England s. xi¹); and Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Voss. Lat. F. 4, fols. 4–33 (Northumbria, s. viii^{1/3}). There are no pre-Conquest manuscripts of Solinus but Bede knew the *Collectanea* and used it in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (see *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*, <<http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk>>).

rerum,¹⁵ Gauthier of Metz, reproducing much from Honorius, in his *Image du Monde* (1246); Bartholomeus Anglicus (before 1203–1272) in *De proprietatibus rerum*; and Brunetto Latini (c. 1210–1294) in his *Tresor*. But marvels were not of universal interest. For instance, monsters are conspicuous by their absence from the *De naturis rerum* of Alexander Neckam (1157–1217). Instead, Alexander discusses animals found in bestiaries, and the different qualities of stones found in the lapidaries that often accompany bestiaries.

Two earlier Latin writers, Macrobius (*fl. c. 400*) and Martianus Capella (writing between 410 and 429), ought also to be mentioned because they transmitted much of the geographical knowledge which framed learned thinking about marvels. Macrobius wrote *Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis*, a Neoplatonic commentary on the *Dream of Scipio* found at the end of Cicero's *Republic*.¹⁶ It describes the five-zone model of the world reproduced in many medieval maps. On this account, the extreme northern and southern parts of the globe are uninhabitable because frozen and the central zone is uninhabitable because it is fiery with heat. Between them are two habitable zones, one in the northern hemisphere and one in the south, their climate tempered by the competing influence of hot and frigid zones. Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* delineates through allegory the intellectual disciplines that become the Trivium and Quadrivium of the medieval school syllabus.¹⁷ His discussion of geography is a significant contribution to the learned tradition because it contains, in Wittkower's words, 'a wealth of geographical mythology which includes, of course, a great number of fabulous races'.¹⁸

Another writer of this period is Augustine of Hippo (354–430), for whom the possible existence of marvels and monsters raised theological questions. Augustine posed and answered them in such a way that his account remained unchallenged in the period up to the *Wonders of the East* and beyond. The key passages are found in *De civitate Dei*: book xvi.viii considers the Plinian races, followed by a section on Antipodes (xvi.ix); and book xxi.iv–vii discusses wonders, many of which occur in the bestiary and lapidary traditions.

¹⁵ It is worth noting that the *Liber III de monstruosis hominibus orientis*, Thomas's section on the Plinian races in *Liber de natura rerum*, 'frequently appears independently, often with illustrations' (Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', p. 338).

¹⁶ The standard edition is the second volume of J.A. Willis, ed., *Macrobius*, 2nd ed., BSGRT, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1994). A translation is available in W.H. Stahl, trans., *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio by Macrobius*, RWCS (New York, NY, 1990).

¹⁷ The standard edition is J.A. Willis, ed., *Martianus Capella*, BSGRT (Leipzig, 1983); a translation can be found in the second volume of W.M. Stahl, with R. Johnson and E.L. Burge, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, RWCS, 2 vols. (New York, NY, 1991–1992).

¹⁸ Wittkower, 'Marvels of the East', p. 167.

For Augustine, the question of these monstrous races was an anthropological one – i.e. are these races human? He is quite clear on the point: ‘anyone born anywhere as man (that is, as a rational and mortal animal), no matter how unusual he may be to our bodily senses...derives from the first created man; and no believer will doubt this’.¹⁹ His argument continues:

If, however, the creatures of which these wondrous things are written are indeed men, why was it God's will to create some races in this way? Perhaps it was so that, when monsters are born of men among us, as they must be, we should not think them the work of an imperfect craftsman: perhaps it was so that we should not suppose that...God has erred. In which case, it ought not to seem absurd to us that, just as some monsters occur with the various races of mankind, so there should be certain monstrous races within the whole human race as well.²⁰

Other literary sources also contributed to the learned lore concerning marvels. The importance of Virgil should not be underestimated, particularly the *Aeneid*. As Ziolkowski and Putnam note: ‘Although it has sometimes been suggested that Virgil was little known in Anglo-Saxon England, the cases of Aldhelm and his slightly younger contemporary Bede support the opinion that Virgil was well known to at least some authors’.²¹ Virgil’s importance as a source for marvels can be seen in the list of sources of the *Liber monstrorum*.²² Of the 116 sections over three books, Virgil is the source of thirty-two and the *Aeneid* accounts for twenty-eight of these.

The second major literary phenomenon is the group of texts relating Alexander the Great’s Indian exploits. The Alexander tradition is diverse and complex but two of this group, both of which have already been mentioned, are of particular interest. The first, *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, is a genuine member of the group; the second, the *Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian* is

¹⁹ R.W. Dyson, ed. and trans., *Augustine. The City of God Against the Pagans*, Cambridge Texts in the Hist. of Political Thought (Cambridge, 1998), p. 708. This might be contrasted with Augustine’s approach to marvels in Book xxi. There the question is not one of anthropology but origin: are wonders natural, the consequence of another order of nature (i.e. performed by angels or demons), or divine (i.e. miracles)?

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 709–710.

²¹ J.M. Ziolkowski and M.C.J. Putnam, ed., *The Virgilian Tradition: the First Fifteen Hundred Years* (New Haven, CT, 2008), p. 92. See the entries on Aldhelm and Alcuin in the same volume (pp. 92–100) and the entries for Virgil in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*.

²² Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 318–320.

not strictly an Alexander text at all but was ‘pressed into service in the composition of the later versions of *Historia de preliis*.²³

The pseudonymous *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* was very popular throughout the medieval period. Like the *Letter of Pharasmenes*, it was originally composed in Greek, although the Latin translation ‘was certainly available by the end of the seventh century and probably much earlier’.²⁴ Stoneman notes that there are ‘67 MSS of the Latin text in European libraries, dating from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries, and a further five in the USA’.²⁵ The *Epistola* often circulated with other Alexander material, notably the ‘Zacher Epitome’ of Julius Valerius’s *Res gestae Alexandri Macedonis* – which functioned effectively as a prologue to the *Epistola* – and the oldest version of the *Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo per litteras facta*.²⁶ At some point in the hundred years after the late ninth century the *Epistola* was translated into Old English; a copy is preserved in Vitellius A. xv, along with the *Wonders*. The *Epistola* shares material with both the *Liber monstorum*, the *Letter of Pharasmenes* and – as one of its descendants – the *Wonders of the East*.

The ‘Wonders of the East’ and the ‘Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian’

The relationship between the *Wonders* and the *Letter* is complicated and the most detailed account remains Ann Knock’s 1982 doctoral thesis.²⁷ As noted

²³ R. Stoneman, ‘Primary Sources from the Classical and Early Medieval Periods’, *A Companion to Alexander Literature in the Middle Ages*, ed. Z. David Zuwiyya (Leiden, 2011), pp. 1–20 (at 16). An F-group version of the *Letter* was used as a source for the second interpolated recension of the *Historia* known to scholars as J^2 (see Knock, ‘Synoptic Tradition’, pp. 351–357).

²⁴ Knock, ‘Synoptic Edition’, p. 36.

²⁵ Stoneman, ‘Primary Sources’, p. 15. The standard edition is W. Boer, ed., *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, BKP 50, rev. ed. (Meisenheim am Glan, 1973). Translations can be found in Stoneman, *Legends of Alexander*, pp. 3–19 and L.L. Gunderson, *Alexander’s Letter to Aristotle about India*, BKP 110 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1980).

²⁶ G. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, ed. D.J.A. Ross (Cambridge, 1956), p. 4 and p. 25, n. 2. Also, Stoneman, ‘Primary Sources’, p. 14. A post-Conquest example of this combination is London, BL, Royal 13 A. i (s. xi^{ex}). For the *Collatio* see M. Steinmann, *Alexander der Große und die ‘nackten Weisen’ Indiens: Der fiktive Briefwechsel zwischen Alexander und dem Brahmanenkönig Dindimus*, Klassische Philologie 4 (Berlin, 2012); for the ‘Zacher epitome’, J. Zacher, ed., *Julii Valerii epitome* (Halle, 1867). The *Collatio* is translated in Stoneman, *Legends of Alexander*, pp. 57–66.

²⁷ See n. 5 above. Knock’s thesis was never published but is freely available through the BL’s online service, EThoS, <<http://ethos.bl.uk>>. See also Gibb, ‘Critical Edition’, pp. 200–211.

earlier, the textual tradition falls into two groups: the F-group and the P-group. Each group contains witnesses to different versions of the *Letter of Pharasmenes* and what might be called a subset of related texts. In the P-group the subset is *Mirabilia* and *Wonders*; in the F-group, it is the material reproduced by Gervase of Tilbury in the third book of his *Otia imperialia*.

The F-group texts have been given the titles the *Letter of Fermes to Hadrian* (or *Fermes Letter*) and the *Letter of King Feramen to Hadrian* or (*Feramen Rex*). *Fermes Letter* survives in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouv. acq. lat. 1065, fols. 92v–95r (s. ix/x; provenance Beauvais). It was first edited by Henri Omont in 1913.²⁸ In Knock's words, *Fermes Letter* is

the fullest surviving text of the *Letter of Pharasmenes*. It is also the text which most consistently maintains the epistolary format, both in the lengthy and detailed first and final paragraphs, in which the writer refers to previous correspondance and describes his method of collecting data, and by the use of first and second persons at strategic points in the body of the text.²⁹

The Paris manuscript also exhibits the hand of a twelfth- or thirteenth-century corrector that is further evidence (if any were needed) of interest in the learned tradition during the scholastic period.

Feramen Rex, the second F-group text, was unknown to scholarship until Ann Knock discovered it. It survives in four manuscripts and the only edition to date is Knock's thesis.³⁰ The text of *Feramen Rex* is shorter than *Fermes Letter*; Knock believes it to be 'deliberate epitome' rather than an 'accidental shortening'.³¹

Gervase reproduces almost the whole of *Fermes Letter* in Book III of his *Otia imperialia*, rearranging the order slightly and omitting the epistolary elements in favour of some remarks of his own on the veracity of the marvels he reports.³²

²⁸ H. Omont, 'Lettre à l'empereur Adrien sur les merveilles d'Asie', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes* 74 (1913), 507–515.

²⁹ Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', p. 214.

³⁰ Monte Cassino, Archivio dell'Abbazia, 391, fols. 82v–84v (s. xi); Cava, Archivio della Badia Santissima Trinità, 3, fols. 397r–398r (c. 1050); Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 19 (*olim A. 16*), fols. 198v–199r (s. xii); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, anc. fond. lat. 7418, fols. 268r–270v (s. xiv^{med}).

³¹ Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', pp. 247–259 (at 257).

³² These are sections III.lxxii–lxxxi in the numbering of the most recent edition. See S.E. Banks and J.W. Binns, ed. and trans., *Gervase of Tilbury. Otia imperialia: Recreation for an Emperor*, OMT (Oxford, 2002), pp. 694–711. Gervase's comment on his subject matter is at the beginning of III.lxxxi. Knock notes that Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 933, fols. 1r–85r (s. xiii) and Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Helmstadt 481,

He also includes material from a P-group text in Book II which duplicates that found in Book III. The women with boar's teeth, the horned asses and snakes with shining eyes, and the bearded women all appear first in Book II; and reflecting the different P-group and F-group characteristics of their source, the *honesti homines* of Book II are *hominum plurimum locupletum* in Book III.³³ As Knock notes, 'This unwitting double use of the material provides a vivid demonstration of the appeal this material had to Gervase, as to so many learned men of his time'.³⁴

The last member of the P-group to survive in manuscript (other than *Mirabilia* and *Wonders*) is the Old French translation known as *Lepistle le roy Perimenis a lempereur* and preserved in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 14562, fols. 5v–6v (s. xiii). It is closely related to the Latin of *Mirabilia* found in Tiberius B. v but that manuscript is not the source.³⁵ Knock has demonstrated that the Old French translation and *Mirabilia* 'go back to a single source', the translation retaining the 'epistolary nature' of the original which *Mirabilia* discards.³⁶

There are two further Latin texts in the P-group but they survive only in transcriptions. The first, known as *Epistola Premonis*, was printed by Eberhard Graff (1780–1841) from a Strassburg manuscript (ms C. iv. 15) lost when the town library was destroyed by fire in 1870.³⁷ The second transcription, known as *Epistola Parmoensis*, was printed by Johannes Pitra (1812–89) from a manuscript he claimed to have found among the Voss manuscripts at Leiden.³⁸ Pitra's manuscript has not been traced, so the transcription cannot be verified; moreover, as Knock notes, Pitra edited 'silently, and is not the most faithful of intermediaries'.³⁹

fol. 1r–88r (s. xiii/xiv) acknowledge the *Letter* as Gervase's source ('Synoptic Edition', pp. 265–266).

33 Banks and Binns, *Otia imperialia*, pp. 192 + 702; 198 + 694ff; 214 + 700ff. On Gervase's P-group material in Book II, see Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', pp. 301–308.

34 Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', p. 266.

35 Pace the text's first editor A. Hilka, who prints the Old French alongside a text of *Mirabilia* derived from Cockayne's 1861 edition from Tiberius B. v. See A. Hilka, 'Ein neuer (altfranzösischer) Text des Briefes über die Wunder Asiens', *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 46 (1923), 92–103; cf. T.O. Cockayne, *Narratiunculae Anglice conscriptae* (London, 1861), pp. 62–66.

36 Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', p. 175; cf. Gibb, 'Critical Edition', p. 207–208.

37 E.G. Graff, *Diutiska: Denkmäler deutscher Sprache und Literatur*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1826–1829) II, 192–198, reprinted in James, *Marvels of the East*, pp. 33–40.

38 J.B. Pitra, *Analecta sacra Spicilegio Solesmensi parata*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1876–1891) II, pp. 648–649.

39 Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', p. 150.

Lastly, it should be noted that the compiler of the *Liber monstrorum* used a P-group text of the *Letter of Pharasmenes* as one of his sources. Its importance as a witness to the text of the *Letter* is limited because of the compiler's method; but the *Liber* (which survives in five manuscripts of continental origin) is an important text in the learned tradition.⁴⁰

In conclusion, it can be seen that the *Wonders* and *Mirabilia* are subset of the P-group texts within the large and complex family of texts known as the *Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian*. They are significant for their unparalleled cycle of illustrations, as English witnesses to a largely continental textual tradition, and as evidence that the learned tradition concerning wonders was of sufficient interest to Anglo-Saxon readers to be adapted to local contexts. It is to these contexts that we now turn.

40 Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Voss. lat. Oct. 60, fols. iv–12v (Fleury, s. ix/x); London, BL, Royal 15 B. xix, fols. 103v–105v (Rheims, s. x); New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 906, pp. 79–110 (Rheims, s. ix); St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 237, pp. 2–6 (St Gallen, s. ix¹); and Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August Bibliothek, Gudianus lat. 148, fols. 108v–123v (Eastern Francia, s. ix/x). Thomas of Cantimpré drew on the *Liber monstrorum* heavily in his *Liber de natura rerum*, the monstrous part of which circulated independently of the rest (see n. 15 above).

The Wonders in a Manuscript of Unknown Origin

London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A. xv

Introduction

Since the publication in 1980 of Fred C. Robinson's article 'Old English Literature in Its Most Immediate Context', it has been common practice to teach medieval literature alongside the manuscripts that preserve it.¹ Attention to the 'material text' is, for the most part, an accepted norm and considerable attention is paid to the manuscript context of literature (even if it sometimes leads to too crude a contrast with the text of the scholarly edition). Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe's remarks on Old English poetry are indicative of the consensus: 'the material text, that is, the poem as transmitted and presented in an individual manuscript, is the fundamental unit in which the poem appears in the world'.² And there is no Old English text to which these observations are more pertinent than *Beowulf*.³ Introductions to *Beowulf* often consider the arguments presented by Kevin Kiernan's '*Beowulf*' and the '*Beowulf*' Manuscript and the responses to it.⁴ Articles occur at regular intervals that present new textual readings, or revise earlier ones. It is instructive to note, however, that with the marked exception of Kiernan, discussions of the *Beowulf* manuscript have largely been confined to establishing its thematic unity.

The thematic unity of London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv has been characterised variously. Perhaps the most famous description of the volume remains Kenneth Sisam's pithy '*liber de diversis monstribus, anglice*'.⁵ Along these lines Nicholas Howe called Vitellius A. xv a 'book of elsewhere' and William Bryanston

¹ F.C. Robinson, 'Old English Literature in its Most Immediate Context', *Old English Literature in Context*, ed. J.D. Niles (Woodbridge, 1980), pp. 11–29, 157–161.

² K. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Editing and the Material text', *The Editing of Old English: Papers from the 1990 Manchester Conference*, ed. D.G. Scragg and P.E. Szarmach (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 147–154 (at 151).

³ In an early discussion of Vitellius A. xv, Kenneth Sisam warned against 'the dangers that beset a historical study in which insufficient attention is paid to manuscript indications...'. See K. Sisam, 'The *Beowulf* Manuscript', *MLR* 11 (1916), 335–37, at 335.

⁴ K.S. Kiernan, '*Beowulf*' and the '*Beowulf*' Manuscript, rev. ed. (Ann Arbor, MI, 1996; first publ. New Brunswick, NJ, 1981). Hereafter *B&BM*.

⁵ K. Sisam, 'The Compilation of the *Beowulf* Manuscript', in his *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 65–96 (at 96).

speculated that the scribe's purpose was to compile 'a book of "history," or an encyclopaedic compendium that furnished "knowledge" of far-off lands, people, monsters, animals and events'. Andy Orchard's monograph discerned 'two themes' that 'uniformly exhibit a twin interest in the outlandish and in the activities of overweening pagan warriors from a distant and heroic past: pride and prodigies'. In a nuanced and convincing reading of the codex, Kathryn Powell saw in the conjunction of texts a treatment of 'the specific opposition of rulers and monsters'; and Brian McFadden contends, albeit confining himself to a discussion of just one text, that it is a 'site for the expression of anxieties' caused by 'Viking invasions, the Benedictine reform and eschatological concerns provoked by the coming millennium'.⁶

The emphasis on thematic unity is explicable because nothing is known of the origin of the manuscript, but it is sometimes accompanied by an assumption that the codex itself is not sufficiently 'high-grade' to warrant detailed consideration – had it not, of course, preserved *Beowulf*. David Dumville's opinion of the scribes exemplifies this: 'neither was, on the evidence of his script, a master-penman and that the two hands are so disharmonious when seen together suggest that the manuscript was produced in a minor scriptorium, in one (that is) whose resources in terms of personnel and materials were poor and whose output was relatively slender'.⁷ The images in the *Wonders of the East* – the only illuminated portion of the manuscript – receive a similar assessment from art historians. The opinion of Elżbieta Temple is not untypical. They are, she says, '[r]ather rough and incompetent but not without their own fascination...'.⁸ Perhaps the most generous overall assessment of Vitellius A. xv as a manuscript comes from Sisam: 'It is the plain everyday work of a good

6 Respectively, N. Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven, CT, 2006), pp. 151–194; W.E. Bryanston, 'Beowulf, Monsters, and Manuscripts: Classical Associations', *Res Publica Litterarum* 5.2 (1982), 41–57, at 41; A. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript*, rev. ed. (Toronto, 2003), p. 27; K. Powell, 'Meditating on Men and Monsters: a Reconsideration of the Thematic Unity of the *Beowulf* Manuscript', *RES* n.s. 57 (2006), 1–15, at 4; B. McFadden, 'The Social Context of Narrative Disruption in *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*', *ASE* 30 (2001), 91–114, at 91.

7 D.N. Dumville, 'Beowulf Come Lately. Some Notes on the Palaeography of the Nowell Codex', *ASNSL* 225 (1988), 49–63, at 55.

8 E. Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, 900–1066*, SMIBI 2 (London, 1976), p. 72. Also Sisam, damningly: 'bad draughtsmanship gives many of them a ludicrous effect. Unless he found them in his original, a scribe so incompetent in drawing would hardly have ventured on illustrations' (Sisam, 'Compilation', p. 78).

period, well suited for reading in a monastic library or cloister.⁹ A book so described would be unlikely to attract much attention in its own right.

It is the contention of this monograph that manuscripts – no matter how plain or everyday – are worth studying as *artefacts* for what they might reveal about the culture which produced them. Because there is no evidence, even contested evidence, for the origin of Vitellius A. xv, it cannot be read in the same way as Tiberius B. v or Bodley 614.¹⁰ Vitellius A. xv therefore requires a different approach. In the absence of even a reasonable hypothesis of origin, to read Vitellius A. xv materially is to read it as an object *through* the sticky residue of meaning it acquired as it became a foundational artefact in Anglo-Saxon studies.¹¹ An assessment of its present materiality may not bring us any closer to what we might call its original materiality. But it will enable us to identify the residue for what it is and allow us to see this manuscript again with freshened eyes. This chapter will therefore examine the two elements of the manuscript for which it is denigrated as an artefact and which seem to cause scholars of Anglo-Saxon England either anxiety or embarrassment: the illustration and the palaeography. This is followed by a discussion of the codicology – a subject that has caused much ink to be spilled – since the integrity or otherwise of the manuscript is key for any reading of the *Wonders*.

Illustration

Mary Olsen is right to note that '[s]cholars seem to be much concerned with the aesthetic quality of the Vitellius drawings' rather than with their content or subsequent analysis.¹² Although the images are crude, they retain in the original a chaotic vibrancy that is not captured in reproduction. This scholarly preoccupation with aesthetics stems perhaps from the fact that few parallels – stylistically or iconographically – are known to have survived from the corpus of Anglo-Saxon art in manuscript or other media. Nonetheless, parallels exist which show that the Vitellius A. xv artist, or the artists of his exemplar, worked

⁹ Sisam, 'Compilation', p. 96.

¹⁰ Both Sisam ('Compilation', p. 95) and E.G. Stanley suggest London as a possible location for the scriptorium (E.G. Stanley, 'The Date of *Beowulf*: some Doubts and No Conclusions', *The Dating of 'Beowulf'*, ed. C. Chase, Toronto oE ser. 6 (Toronto, 1981), pp. 197–211 (at 211)).

¹¹ See above, p. 5.

¹² M.C. Olsen, *Fair and Varied Forms: Visual Textuality in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts*, Stud. in Med. Hist. and Culture 15 (New York, NY, and London, 2003), p. 133.

within a tradition; as Sisam supposed, these images are unlikely to have appeared *sui generis*.¹³

Homodubii

There is on the bottom right-hand corner of fol. 102v of Vitellius A. xv a picture of a *homodubius* (Fig. 1). The similarity between this image and the centaurs of the 'Bayeux Tapestry' was first noted by Carola Hicks and, later, by Cyril Hart.¹⁴ The *homodubius* of Vitellius A. xv and the centaurs of the Tapestry are depicted with outstretched arms, although the face is sometimes drawn in profile as it is in the manuscript. This gesture seems to be peculiar to Anglo-Saxon iconography and is, as Hicks notes, a contrast to the familiar imagery associated with Sagittarius in which he holds a bow, or that associated with Chiron (Centaurus), who holds a branch.¹⁵ However, she suggests that the 'long hair and raised arms' of the Bayeux centaurs were 'more commonly attributes of the mermaid, a figure which reached Christian art through the *Physiologus*, where it was always described in the same section as the centaur; the features were perhaps regarded as interchangeable'. She also notes, without providing references, that this version of the centaur 'also appear[s] in pre-Conquest sculpture'.¹⁶ Hicks's intuition regarding the conflation of mermaid and centaur imagery is confirmed with reference to the Icelandic *Physiologus* – a manuscript of which the importance for the Vitellius *Wonders* has not hitherto been noted.

¹³ Sisam, 'Compilation', p. 78.

¹⁴ C. Hicks, 'The Borders of the Bayeux Tapestry', *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. C. Hicks (Stamford, 1992), pp. 251–265 (at 261, n. 20). See also C. Hart, 'The Canterbury Contribution to the Bayeux Tapestry', *Art and Symbolism in Medieval Europe: Papers of the 'Medieval Europe Brugge 1997' Conference*, ed. G. De Boe and F. Verhaeghe, IAP Rapporten 5 (Zellik, 1997), pp. 7–15 (at 13); 'The Bayeux Tapestry and Schools of Illumination at Canterbury', *ANS* 22 (2000), 117–67, esp. 140; and 'The Cicero-Aratea and the Bayeux Tapestry', *King Harold II and the Bayeux Tapestry*, ed. G.R. Owen-Crocker, Publ. of the Manchester Centre for AS Stud. 3 (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 161–178. In none of these articles does Hart mention Hicks's research. Since many of Hart's identifications have parallels elsewhere, they are not altogether convincing.

¹⁵ In some astronomical representations, Chiron holds a hare, e.g. London, BL, Harley 647 (Lotharingia, s. ix²/4; provenance St Augustine's, Canterbury), fols. 12r and 21v; and Tiberius B. v, fol. 43r. He is represented in this manner in the lower border of the Tapestry. See G.R. Owen-Crocker, 'Reading the Bayeux Tapestry through Canterbury Eyes', *Anglo-Saxons: Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, ed. S. Keynes and A.P. Smyth (Dublin, 2006), pp. 243–265 (at 262–263). For a reproduction see D.M. Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (London, 1985), pl. 20.

¹⁶ Both quotations and observations may be found in Hicks, 'Borders', p. 261. The centaur also follows the mermaid in the *Liber monstrorum* (see Orchard's edition in *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 262).



FIGURE 1 Homodubius. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 102v

The Icelandic *Physiologus* is actually two manuscript fragments now preserved in a composite volume at Reykjavik.¹⁷ The first fragment, ‘*Physiologus A*’ (673 a 1, 4°), comprises two leaves. The second fragment, ‘*Physiologus B*’ is

¹⁷ Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í slenskum fræðum, 673 a, 4° (*olim* Copenhagen, Den Arnamagnæanske Samling, 673 a, 4°).

found in the first seven leaves of a nine-leaf fragment (673 a II, 4°), the final two leaves of which contain homiletic allegories of a ship and the rainbow.¹⁸ Both fragments are dated c. 1200. Although a photographic facsimile was published in 1938, a lithograph published in 1889 remains useful in clarifying images which are not clear in the photographs.¹⁹

From the legs that protrude from the fishy portion of her body, the mermaid of 'Physiologus A' (fol. iv) can be identified as a Siren (Fig. 2). She faces the viewer with her arms outstretched, rather than the sailors who have just harpooned her. This text is followed by an account of what could be either flies or locusts (ON *kleggi*) and of the centaur (specified as an onocentaur, i.e. part human, part ass).²⁰ Unfortunately, no illustration survives to accompany this (if indeed it ever existed) but there is an image in the parallel section of 'Physiologus B' (fol. 4r; Fig. 3). Here the creature (again an onocentaur) is properly distinguished by an ass's lower parts and a bald head but it retains the outstretched posture of its arms. These images are a direct parallel to both the *homodubius* of Vitellius A. xv and the Bayeux centaurs and are clearly part of the same iconographic vocabulary.²¹

The only comparable Anglo-Saxon image of which I am aware – and perhaps the image that Hicks had in mind – is preserved on the shaft of a stone cross known to scholars as 'Aycliffe 2' (s. x²; Fig. 4). On it a 'centaur-like creature' holds its arms out straight to grasp a staff in one hand and, in the other, its own tail.²² No easy interpretation of this image is available. However the

¹⁸ On the ship allegory, see J.W. Marchand, 'The Ship Allegory in the *Ezzolied* and in Old Icelandic', *Neophilologus* 60 (1976), 238–250; on the rainbow, see J.W. Marchand, 'Two Notes on the Old Icelandic Physiologus Manuscript', *Mod. Lang. Notes* 91 (1976), 501–505 and C. Cucina, 'The Rainbow Allegory in the Old Icelandic Physiologus Manuscript', *Gripla* 22 (2011), 63–118. A third section bound in this miscellany comprises a 'Drawing Book' (*Teiknibókin*) dated s. xiv^{3/4} (MS 673a, III, 4°). Descriptions of all three sections can be found online at <<http://handrit.is/>>.

¹⁹ H. Hermannsson, *The Icelandic Physiologus*, *Islandica* 27 (Ithaca, NY, 1938); V. Dahlerup, 'Physiologus i to Islandske Bearbejdelse', *Aarbøger for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie* 4, 2nd ser. (1889), 199–290.

²⁰ On analogues of the *kleggi*, see J. Marchand, 'The Old Icelandic *Physiologus*', *De consolatione philologiae: Studies in Honor of Evelyn S. Firchow*, ed. A. Grotans, H. Beck and A. Schwob, *Göppinger arbeiten zur Germanistik* 682, 2 vols. (Göppingen, 2000) I, 231–244 (at 235).

²¹ For an extended discussion see V.D. Corazza, 'Crossing Paths in the Middle Ages: the *Physiologus* in Iceland', *The Garden of Crossing Paths: the Manipulation and Rewriting of Medieval Texts*, ed. M. Buzzoni and M. Bampi, Atti 1, rev. ed. (Venice, 2007), pp. 225–248.

²² R. Cramp, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture in England, Volume 1: County Durham and Northumberland*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1984) I, 43.



FIGURE 2 *Mermaid (Physiologus A).* MS 673a I, 4°, fol. n; from Dahlerup's lithograph

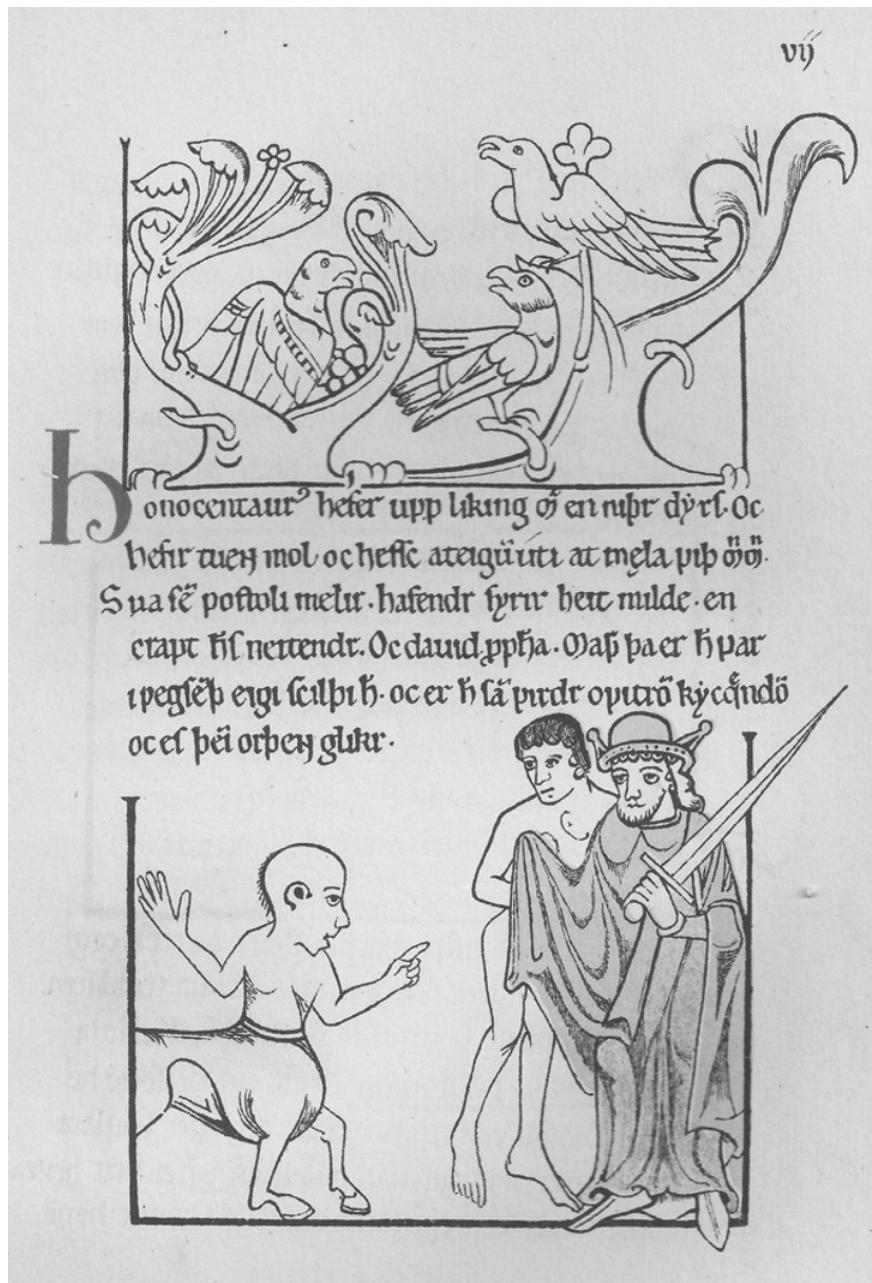
FIGURE 3 Onocentaur (*Physiologus B*). ms 673a II, 4°, fol. 4r; from Dahlerup's lithograph



FIGURE 4
Aycliffe 2 (s. x²)

similarity between this and these other representations allows us to note that the open-armed centaur circulated as part of a wider cultural vocabulary of images. Although images of centaurs hunting or fighting become the predominant iconographic forms in the later tradition, what we see in Vitellius A. xv, the 'Bayeux Tapestry' and the Icelandic *Physiologus* are not aberrant images. Rather they are survivors from an iconographic tradition which is now imperfectly represented.

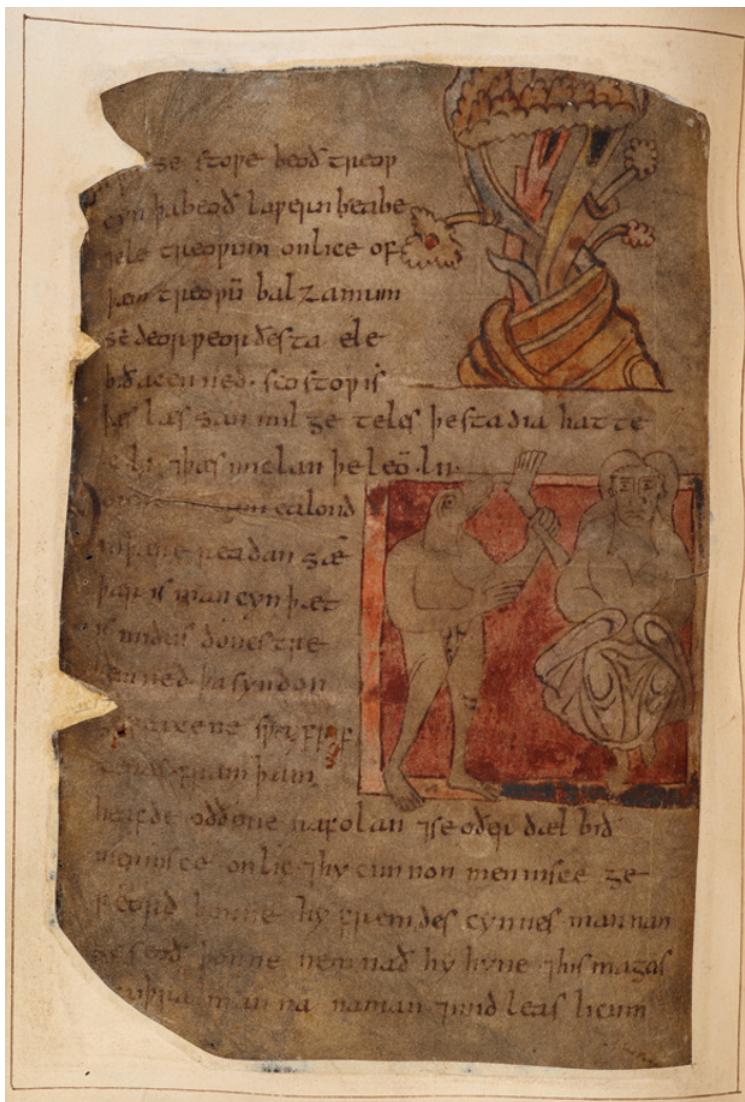


FIGURE 5 *Donestre. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 103v*

Cynocephali and Donestre

The *donestre* in Vitellius A. xv (fol. 103v) is depicted brandishing a severed leg at a woman who, not unreasonably, looks rather worried. Less explicably, and without the authority of the Old English text where there is neither woman nor severed leg, she appears to be holding her skirts above her ankles (Fig. 5). It has not hitherto been observed that 'Physiologus A' has a remarkably similar image which I believe explains that in the Vitellius *Wonders*.



FIGURE 6 Plinean races (*Physiologus A*). MS 673a 1, 4°, fol. 2r; from Dahlerup's lithograph

The second leaf of 'Physiologus A' contains no text on the recto or the verso. Instead each side has three registers of images which depict the teratological, or Plinean, races (Fig. 6). Halldór Hermannsson noted the similarity between this leaf and the opening of the 'Westminster Bestiary' (s. xiii^{ex}).²³ For Hermannsson, the inclusion of Plinean races in what is essentially a bestiary 'may point to English connections of the Icelandic work'; Vittoria Corazza is more definite: 'No doubt the Icelandic *Physiologi* derive from models whose origins lie in England'.²⁴

The middle register of fol. 2r contains a giant (which Hermannsson considered one of the *Macrobi*) and a pygmy. They are followed by a *cynocephalus* and three further figures: a woman with long hair whose feet are obscured; and a second woman – identifiable as such by the length of her dress in contrast to the tunics worn by the men – who appears to be touching the first with her right arm while holding a swaddled child in her left. Hermannsson was unable to offer a convincing interpretation of this image because he saw the two adult figures as linked. He did propose, without naming them or giving their literary source in Ctesias's *Indika* (para. 50), that the second figure was an example of the *Pandae*, whose women 'bear only one child which has white hair at birth, but becomes black-haired with age'.²⁵ The most recent editor of the Icelandic *Physiologus*, Carla del Zotto Tozzoli, concurs with Hermannsson's second identification but reads the first figure as a Gorgon (an identification that had occurred to me before seeing Del Zotto Tozzoli's edition).²⁶ These seem the most sensible identifications but, since the *Pandae* were also known as *Macrobi*, it throws doubt on Hermannsson's original identification of the giant.²⁷ It seems unlikely that we should identify two examples of the *Macrobi*/*Pandae* in 'Physiologus A', especially since the first does not have any of the relevant signifying characteristics listed by Ctesias.

²³ London, Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey, 22. For a reproduction of the 'Westminster Bestiary' pages, see pls. 1 and 2 in G.C. Druce, 'Some Abnormal and Composite Human Forms in English Church Architecture', *ArchJ* 72 (1915), 135–186. A similar illustration may be found in the earlier 'Fitzwilliam Bestiary' (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, 254; s. xiiiⁱⁿ).

²⁴ Hermannsson, *Icelandic Physiologus*, p. 12; Corazza, 'Crossing Paths', p. 228.

²⁵ Hermannsson, *Icelandic Physiologus*, p. 13. The account, preserved in Photius's summary, may be found in D. Lenfant, ed., *Ctésias de Cnide. La Perse; l'Inde; autres fragments* (Paris, 2004), pp. 185–186.

²⁶ C. del Zotto Tozzoli, ed., *Il 'Physiologus' in Islanda*, Biblioteca Scandinava di Studi, Richerche e Testi 7 (Venice, 1992), p. 35.

²⁷ J.B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse, NY, 2000), p. 18. The source is Pliny, *Historia naturalis* (vii.ii.28).

This image in ‘Physiologus A’ does, however, allow us to hypothesize a source for the image of the *donestre* in Vitellius A. xv. It may be noted that both women have long, shoulder-length hair; both are drawn frontally; and both have material in front of their legs (skirts in Vitellius A. xv and what appear to be rocks in ‘Physiologus A’). While it cannot be proven, I suggest that the image in Vitellius A. xv was taken from a model similar to ‘Physiologus A’ in which a *cynocephalus* is depicted next to a Gorgon, although neither the Gorgon nor the *donestre* were understood by the artist. In the course of the misunderstanding and in order to make the image more visually coherent, the rocks became skirts while the unspecified item – perhaps a bone, or a scroll – held by the *cynocephalus* in ‘Physiologus A’ (and presumably in its exemplar) becomes the severed leg brandished by the *donestre* in Vitellius A. xv.

Other Similarities

Several other similarities may be observed between the images of Vitellius A. xv and the Icelandic *Physiologi*. The snakes in both manuscripts are drawn with ring and dot motifs along the length of their backs (Vitellius A. xv, fol. 99v; ‘Physiologus A’, fol. 2r+v). This visual characteristic serves to distinguish them from other snake-like creatures, such as the dragons (Vitellius A. xv, fol. 102v). In the *Wonders*, both the serpents with shining eyes (*þara eagen scinað nihtes swa leohte swa blæcern*) and the *Corsiae* have this visual attribute (Fig. 7).

It is interesting that neither illustration in the *Corsiae* section is faithful to the text. The snake on the left lacks its requisite ram-like horns; the creature on the right does display horns similar in shape to oxen but has a head, and a set of claws, quite unlike any donkey. Its depiction from an aerial viewpoint makes it appear more like a horned salamander – or some other form of lizard – than a horned donkey. In fact, the salamander in ‘Physiologus B’ (fol. 3v) is depicted in this manner, albeit without the horns or claws (Fig. 8).

The use of aerial perspective becomes common in the later bestiary tradition, particularly when reptiles are depicted; its use here suggests that the Vitellius A. xv artist was adapting, even while misunderstanding, images from a common iconographic source.²⁸ It demonstrates a further link between the *Wonders* and the *Physiologus* tradition transmitted to Iceland from England.

It is also worth noting the technique of drawing the head and neck of a figure with a single line, which also comprises a collar – often square – and gives the image a naive appearance. This may be seen in many of the Vitellius A. xv figures

²⁸ For a typical later example (s. xiii) of reptiles drawn from above see, Cambridge, UL, Kk. 4. 25, fol. 90r+v.

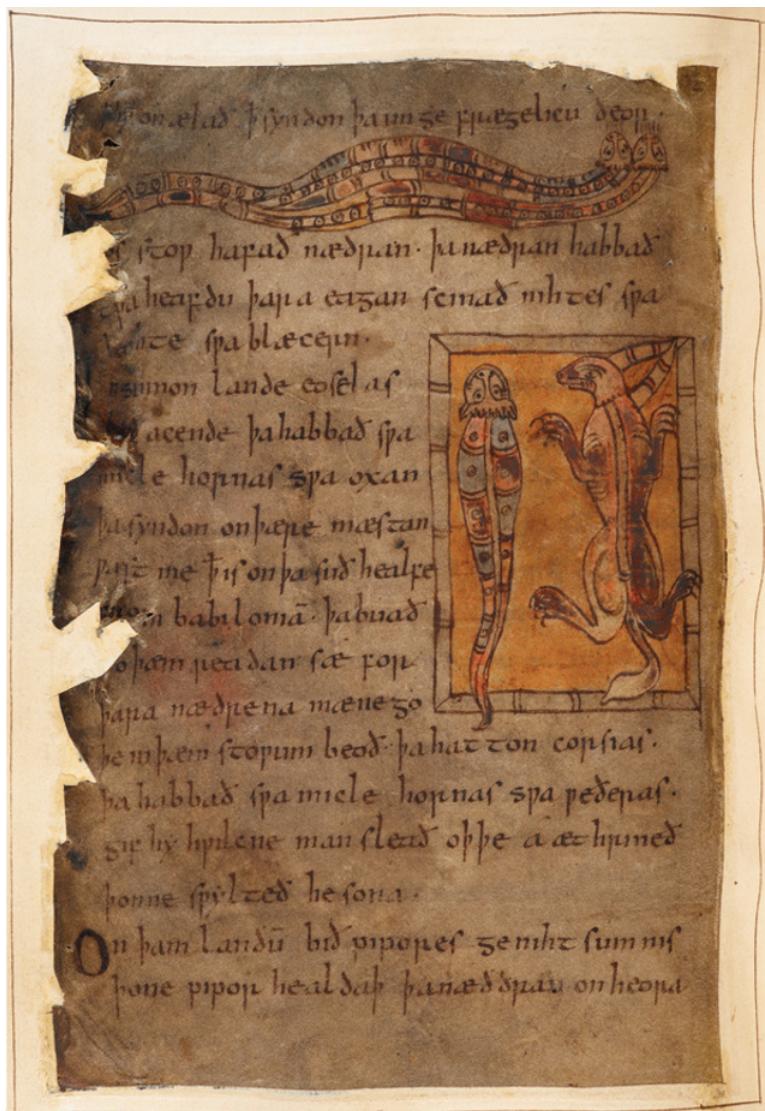


FIGURE 7 *Serpents with shining eyes and Corsiae. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 99v*

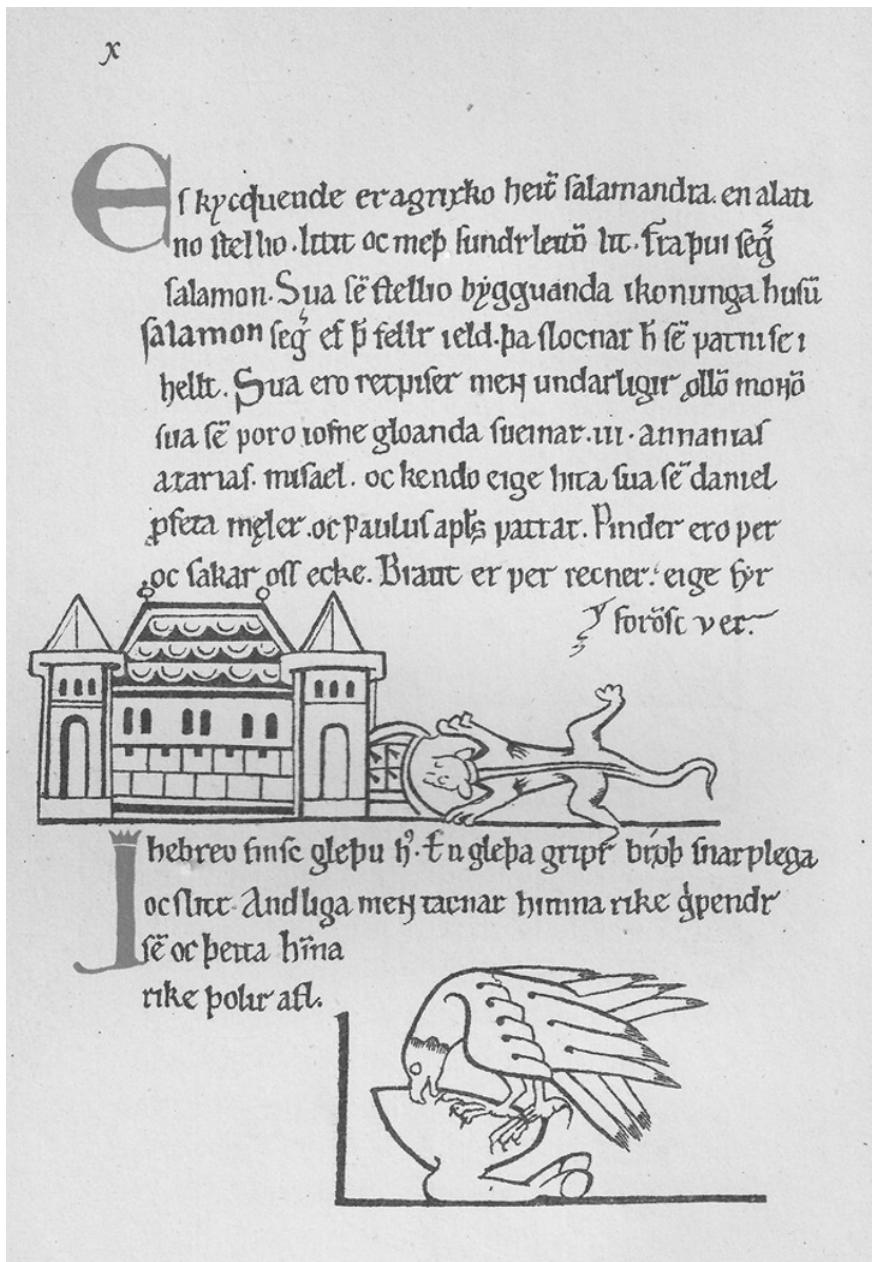


FIGURE 8 Salamander (*Physiologus B*). MS 673a II, 4°, fol. 3v; from Dahlerup's lithograph

and has parallels in the figures in 'Physiologus A' (fol. 2r+v).²⁹ The technique is not unique to Vitellius A. xv and may be found almost as naively in the metrical calendar added to London, BL, Cotton Galba A. xviii (s. xⁱⁿ).³⁰ The Vitellius artist regarded these lines as necessary to define the head and neck even when the subject wears no clothes (e.g. the *donestre* on fol. 103v and the *panotus* on fol. 104r).

It may be seen by reference to sculpture and embroidery that figures constructed in this form were part of a conceptual schema rather than simply the result of drawing technique. For example, the archers in the lower register of the 'Bayeux Tapestry' have their heads sewn in a different colour thread from their bodies. This makes visual sense when the figures are dressed but not when, following immediately after, a soldier is depicted stripped of his armour and left naked. Here, too, the head is composed of one coloured thread and the rest of the body with another.³¹ The same schema may be seen in the so-called 'Bound Devil Stone' – or, less poetically, 'Kirkby Stephen 1' – which is dated to the tenth century (Fig. 9).³²

Again, the neck, the head and the possibility of a beard are defined by lines (v-shaped in this instance) but executed naively with no reference to other facial features, e.g. the chin. The presence of such a representational strategy in Vitellius A. xv and the Icelandic *Physiologus* is further evidence that, naive as they may appear to a modern audience, both manuscripts share an iconographic and a stylistic source.

Conclusion

The observations above place the illustrations of the *Wonders* in an iconographic continuum that precedes Vitellius A. xv and continues for approximately two hundred years after its production. However, the connections between Vitellius A. xv and the Icelandic *Physiologus* prove particularly significant because they provide the earliest link between the *Wonders* and the bestiary traditions. That the *Wonders* as manifest in Bodley 614 (s. xii^{med}) mingled with the bestiary tradition in first half of the thirteenth century may be seen clearly from the 'Royal 12 C. xix Bestiary' (s. xiiiⁱⁿ) and the 'Alnwick Bestiary'

29 Particularly those on fol. 101r+v, 102r, 103v, 104r, 105v and 106r+v.

30 E.g. fol. 4v and 5v. For facsimiles of these pages, see T.H. Ohlgren, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustration: Photographs of Sixteen Manuscripts with Descriptions and Index* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1992), pls. 1.3 and 1.4.

31 Wilson, *Bayeux Tapestry*, pls. 68–70 and 71, respectively.

32 R.N. Bailey and R. Cramp, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, Volume 2: Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 120–121.



FIGURE 9 *Kirkby Stephen 1 (s. x)*

(s. xiii^{med}).³³ Both these bestiaries contain illustrations that appear to be mirror images, reversed along the vertical axis, of some found in the *Wonders* and its companion text in Bodley 614, *Opusculum de ratione spere*.³⁴ The dating of the Icelandic *Physiologus* fragments to c. 1200 is, therefore, crucial. As Florence McCulloch noted: 'The nature of the old *Physiologus* changes sometime during the twelfth century – not beyond recognition...but the transformation is still very great'.³⁵ The fragmentary state of both 'Physiologus A' and 'Physiologus B' forbids a detailed analysis of their relationship to what eventually becomes the bestiary, and this is unfortunate. It is conceivable, however, that they constituted part of that 'intermediate stage' between the 'Latinizations of *Physiologus* and the twelfth-century Bestiaries' which M.R. James supposed to exist but for which he could not account.³⁶

Two points suggest that 'Physiologus A' and 'Physiologus B' occupy this transitional place between *Physiologus* and bestiary. First, MSS 673a i + ii, 4° derive from the Latin tradition known as *versio B* but distinguish themselves from this earlier, unillustrated manuscript tradition of the Latin *Physiologus* by their use of pictures.³⁷ (This is much in the same way that the English manuscripts of the *Wonders* are distinguished from their Continental counterparts by including images). They also are distinguished from other Germanic vernacular translations which, for the most part, do not include illustrations either. The Old English and Old High German versions are unillustrated; so is the German fragment on the onocentaur and siren. The *mise-en-page* of the prose Middle

33 London, BL, Royal 12 C. xix; Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, 100 (*olim* Alnwick, Library of the Duke of Northumberland, 447).

34 For example, from the *Wonders* see the Griffin (Bodley fol. 47r; Alnwick fol. 26r) and the Unicorn (Bodley fol. 48v; Alnwick fol. 11r; Royal fol. 9v). From the *Opusculum* the image of Bootes/Draco inter Arctos may be compared with that of Emorois (Bodley fol. 24r; Alnwick fol. 57r; Royal fol. 67r). For facsimiles of the 'Alnwick Bestiary' and Royal 12 C. xix see E.G. Millar, *A Thirteenth Century Bestiary in the Library of Alnwick Castle* (Oxford, 1958). The influence of Bodley 614 on Emorois is immediately obvious if the Alnwick and Royal illustrations are contrasted with that in the 'Morgan Bestiary', a manuscript with which they are often grouped (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 81, fol. 83r; c. 1185).

35 F. McCulloch, *Mediaeval Latin and French Bestiaries*, Univ. of North Carolina Stud. in the Romance Langs. and Lits. 33, rev. ed. (Chapel Hill, NC, 1962), p. 34.

36 M.R. James, *The Bestiary: being a Reproduction in Full of the Manuscript It 4. 26 in the University Library, Cambridge* (Oxford, 1928), p. 7.

37 Thus, McCulloch: 'I know of no illustrated manuscripts belonging to this group, but it would be surprising if none at all existed' (*Mediaeval Bestiaries*, p. 25). Famous early illustrated Latin *Physiologi* exist in Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 318 (s. ix) and Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 10074 (s. xi) but these are from different families (*versiones C* and *A*, respectively). For a summary of illustrated bestiaries see McCulloch, *Mediaeval Bestiaries*, pp. 70–77.

High German version shows that it was intended to carry images, but these were not drawn. Only the rhymed Middle High German text actually preserves illustrations and these draw on the cycle transmitted via the Latin *Dicta Chrysostomi* version of the *Physiologus*, not *versio B*.³⁸

Secondly, the subject matter also points to a transitional phase. This is suggested by the teratological imagery of 'Physiologus A' and, in 'Physiologus B', the use of patristic sources not normally found in early Latin *Physiologi*.³⁹ It is sometimes noted that bestiaries and wonders are to be found in the same manuscript context. For example, Debra Hassig posits Cambridge, UL, Kk. 4. 25 (s. xii¹) and Cambridge, Trinity College R. 14. 9 (s. xii²-xv) as manuscripts that combine bestiaries and *mirabilia*.⁴⁰ While they do this in the broadest sense, the marvels in Kk. 4. 25 (fol. 101r+v) are the seven wonders of the ancient world, while those in Trinity R. 14. 9 are accretions in a fourteenth-century hand.⁴¹ It is the *codicological* integration of marvels derived from the *Wonders* tradition that is so unusual in ms 673a 1, 4° and this which makes it such important evidence when compared, for example, to Westminster Abbey 22, the 'Fitzwilliam Bestiary' (s. xiiiⁱⁿ) or the 'Sion Bestiary' (after 1277).⁴²

Seen from this perspective, the illustrations of Vitellius A. xv cease to be art-historical embarrassments. Instead, they show that the *Wonders* tradition – in one of its peculiarly English forms – extended beyond the 'plain everyday work of a good period' to inform the bestiary in ways evidenced, not in English manuscripts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but in a culture which

³⁸ Respectively Exeter, Dean and Chapter Library, 3501 (s. x²); Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vindobonensis 233 (s. xi); Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 17195, fol. 33r (s. xii); Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vindobonensis 2721 (s. xii¹); Klagenfurt, Landesarchiv, Cod. GV 6/19 (s. xii). On these vernacular versions see V.D. Corazza, *Il fisiologo nella tradizione letteraria germanica*, Bibliotheca germanica, studi e testi 2 (Alessandria, 1992), pp. 144–156; and N. Henkel, *Studien zum 'Physiologus' im Mittelalter*, Hermaea, germanistische Forschungen n.s. 38 (Tübingen, 1976), pp. 59–96.

³⁹ On this latter point see Marchand, 'Two Notes', pp. 501–505.

⁴⁰ D. Hassig, *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology*, RES Monographs on Anthropology and Aesthetics (Cambridge, 1995), p. 113.

⁴¹ The old foliation (fol. 94r+v) is given in *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, 7 vols. (Cambridge, 1856–7) III, 672. It would be better to understand Kk. 4. 25 as an Alexander manuscript in the manner of London, BL, Royal 12 C. iv (s. xii), in which several Alexander texts are presented alongside astronomical material by Hyginus and others. As is clear from Bodley 614, the intellectual mode of astronomical *fabulae* and the *Wonders* tradition is not dissimilar (see below, pp. 135–141).

⁴² Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, 254; Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ludwig xv 4 (*olim* London, Sion College Arc. L. 40.2/L. 28).

flourished two hundred years after Vitellius A. xv and nearly twelve hundred miles away.

Palaeography

Vitellius A. xv is written in two scribal stints: Scribe 1 wrote fols. 94r-175v/3 to the word *scyran*; Scribe 2 wrote the remainder of the codex to fol. 209v, taking over mid-sentence but beginning a new line at fol. 175v/4 with the word *moste* (Fig. 10).

Neil Ker described them accordingly: ‘They are contemporary with one another, but dissimilar in character, (2) being a late type of square Anglo-Saxon minuscule and (1) a smaller, more pointed and delicate script, influenced by Caroline minuscule...’⁴³ It is worth noting that the fact of their dissimilarity is accompanied by an urge to rank them aesthetically (one is ‘more delicate’ than another). Kemp Malone does the same in the introduction to his facsimile volume: ‘The hands of the two scribes differ markedly, though both belong to the insular tradition and to the period AD 980-1020. S1 had a light touch and, though no calligrapher, wrote with an easy grace foreign to S2, who made his letters with heavy, vigorous strokes of the pen’.⁴⁴ Some have had an even less generous opinion of Scribe 2. Kevin Kiernan, in the preface to the revised edition of his monograph, describes the work as ‘almost crudely utilitarian’.⁴⁵

Palaeography is a discipline notoriously prone to subjective and aesthetic judgements. Ker’s catalogue, no matter how invaluable it remains to Anglo-Saxonists, is full of them. Two examples – chosen almost at random – demonstrate this: the hand of Cambridge, UL, Kk. 3. 18 is described as ‘regular, stiff, and rather ugly’ and that of BL, Harley 2110, fols. 4* and 5* is ‘uncalligraphic’.⁴⁶ Using such terminology, the judgement of one palaeographer will not necessarily communicate well to another, no matter how clear these categories may have seemed to an author when they were chosen. Having spent much time with both Malone’s printed facsimile and Kiernan’s CD-rom, it came as quite a

43 N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957), p. 282.

44 *The Nowell Codex: British Museum Cotton Vitellius A. xv, Second ms*, ed. K. Malone, EEMF 12 (Copenhagen, 1963), p. 17.

45 Kiernan, *B&BM*, p. xx. See also D.N. Dumville’s reply to this preface, ‘The *Beowulf*-Manuscript and How Not to Date It’, *Med. Eng. Stud. Newsletter* 39 (1998), 21–27. In the main body of Kiernan’s monograph, palaeography of any sort is eschewed in favour of a discussion of the reliability of the scribes as copyists.

46 Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 37 and p. 308 respectively. Examples from this and other sources could be multiplied with ease.

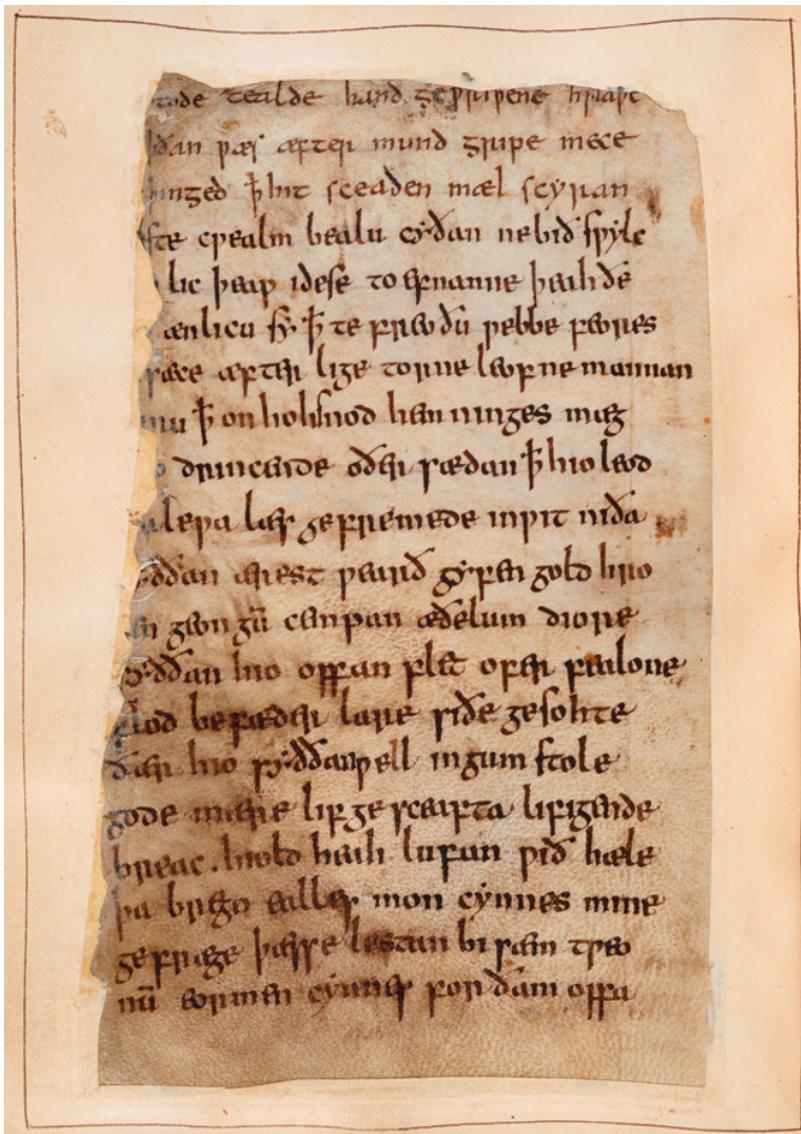


FIGURE 10 London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 175v

surprise when, upon opening Vitellius A. xv itself for the first time, I saw two hands which are as clear and well-written as many I have encountered.⁴⁷ The manuscript is badly damaged, of course, and the heat of the eighteenth-century fire distorted both the vellum and the words written on it considerably.

⁴⁷ Electronic 'Beowulf', ed. K.S. Kiernan with A. Prescott and others (London, 1999) [2 CDS].

But I did not have the impression that the two hands were particularly ‘disharmonious’ either *in toto* or at the ‘opening’ fols. 174v/175r where the change takes place. Instead, with the volume in my hand, I was able to imagine a codex undamaged by fire and perfectly attractive in its own terms, not as a high-grade volume but as a working or, more specifically – and in direct contrast to the visual invitation to contemplation through the grand display of Tiberius B. v – a reading volume.

If it is not in the script itself, or even the ‘ill-matched’ conjunction of scripts, the apparent disharmony of Vitellius A. xv must reside elsewhere.⁴⁸ I suggest it resides in the limits of the scholarly discourse that interprets it. I do not argue that Vitellius A. xv is a particularly beautiful codex. (With the exception of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11 (s. x/xi), none of the Anglo-Saxon poetic manuscripts is beautiful palaeographically). Vitellius A. xv is not beautiful by our standards nor was it beautiful by the standards of Anglo-Saxon culture c. AD 1000. But I do argue that the drubbing it has received on aesthetic grounds says less about its originary context and rather more about its reception. To borrow a phrase from Pauline Stafford, we must ‘unthink’ a ‘teleological’ reading of the manuscript in which the sum of its parts – script, illustration and, for many scholars, the prose texts – are simply not fit for purpose as a key artefact for understanding both the early heroic and late courtly culture of the Anglo-Saxon period.⁴⁹ The disharmony is not the manuscript’s, but ours.

It is helpful to approach this subject by examining what Edward Christie calls the ‘semiotic powers imputed to Anglo-Saxon letters’ during the Early Modern rediscovery of Anglo-Saxon culture.⁵⁰ Peter Lucas notes the following in a study of the letter-forms that Archbishop Matthew Parker (1504–75) had cut for his early print editions of Old English texts:

Parker seems to have regarded Anglo-Saxon types as we regard reproduction furniture, as virtue regained; they would provide a key of remembrance facilitating easier access to the authority of Anglo-Saxon writings. Even more than the archaizing hands that Parker advocated for transcripts, the new types were to be, in Malcolm Parkes’s phrase,

⁴⁸ The adjective is Sisam’s (‘Compilation’, p. 96).

⁴⁹ P. Stafford, ‘Writing the Biography of Eleventh-Century Queens’, *Writing Medieval Biography: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 99–109 (at 109).

⁵⁰ E. Christie, ‘The Image of the Letter: from the Anglo-Saxons to the *Electronic Beowulf*’, *Culture, Theory and Critique* 44 (2003), 129–150, at 130. Christie’s article is challenging, thought-provoking and useful, but not, in the end, entirely convincing.

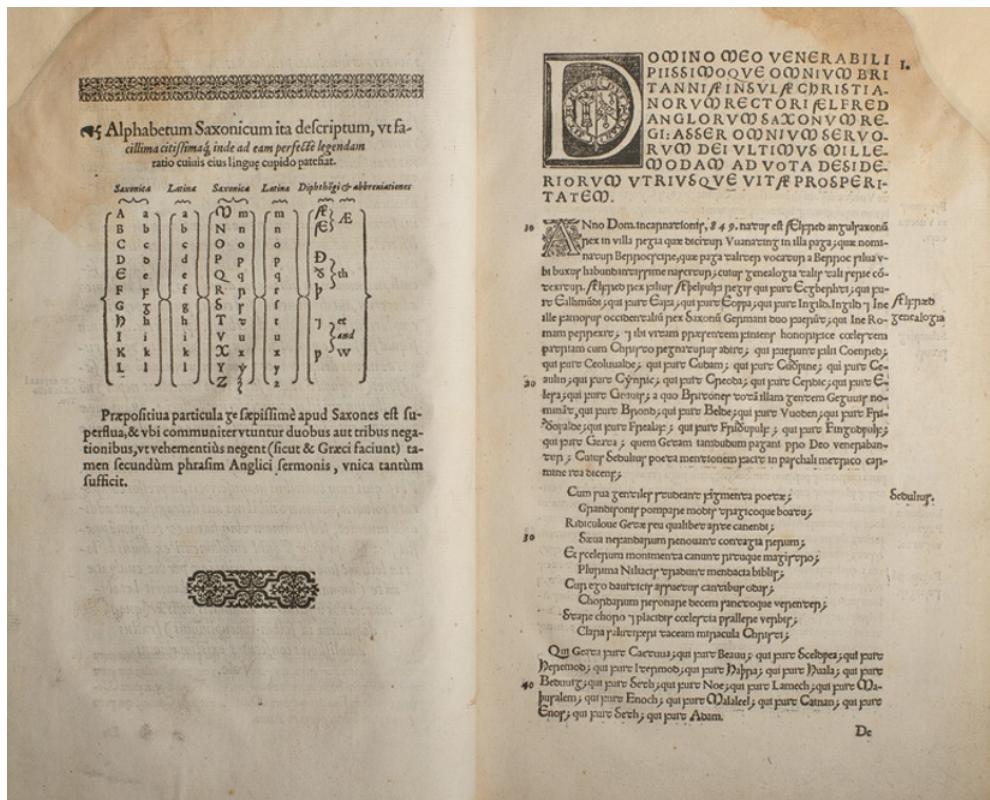


FIGURE 11 *Asser, Ælfredi regis res gestæ*, ed. Matthew Parker (London, 1574), sig. B2r & p. 1

'emblematic of the past', a past regarded as yielding authoritative guidance for the present and future.⁵¹

For example, Parker's edition of Asser's *Ælfredi regis res gestæ* (London, 1574; STC² 863) uses italic to print his editorial preface but a type based on Old English letters – i.e. on Anglo-Saxon Square minuscule – to print Asser's Latin (Fig. 11).

Parker's departure from the conventions of Early Modern printing made his Anglo-Saxon letters a 'locus of ostensibly transparent contact with the past', for in doing so he made the letter-forms signify more than just the Old English

⁵¹ P.J. Lucas, 'A Testimony of Verye Ancient Tyme? Some Manuscript Models for the Parkerian Anglo-Saxon Type-Designs', *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their Scribes and Readers: Essays Presented to M.B. Parkes*, ed. P.R. Robinson and R. Zim (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 147–188 (at 169).

language.⁵² As Parker well knew, what is now called Square minuscule was used to write both Latin and Old English, as was the Insular script system before it. In cutting a font derived from this, he created a metonym for the whole of Anglo-Saxon culture in both its Latinity and its Englishness.⁵³

To the contemporary reader Parker's use of Anglo-Saxon letter-forms in a Latin text seems incongruous because it disrupts our assumption that typographical form should fit textual content, i.e. it disrupts the distinction we have inherited from the eleventh century between a script reserved for English (Vernacular minuscule) and one reserved for Latin (Caroline minuscule). In this sense it is a classic example of the bibliographical principle that 'forms effect sense'.⁵⁴ Nonetheless within the logic of its own rhetoric, i.e. Parker's rhetoric, it is remarkably potent. Not only is it historically accurate but it operates as a visual zeugma in which Anglo-Saxon letter-forms become the predicate of a linguistically plural culture.

In a comparable manner the letters of Vitellius A. xv have assumed – or, more accurately, have had imposed upon them – a semiotic importance beyond their linguistic message, signifying the loss of Anglo-Saxon culture in both its vernacular and Latinate forms. This is because, as the only witness to *Beowulf*, Vitellius A. xv is the foundational document for the modern study of Anglo-Saxon culture. Moreover, its material significance is not just confined to reconstructing Anglo-Saxon England; it also records the history of scholarly attempts to perform that task. As Allen J. Frantzen notes, 'The manuscript history [of Vitellius A. xv] is an archive of the development of Anglo-Saxon studies. The oldest layer of that archive, the manuscript, already comprises several layers of data: corrections, erasures, a palimpsest, damaged and rebound pages'.⁵⁵ To stretch Sisam's dictum somewhat, the palaeography of Vitellius A. xv is indeed proof that 'palaeography touches history at every point'.⁵⁶

In order to assess the significance of the palaeography of Vitellius A. xv – i.e. to read the scripts as a component part of the material whole – it is first necessary to describe the work of each scribe with some degree of technical

⁵² Christie, 'Image of the Letter', p. 138.

⁵³ For an example of OE and Latin written in Square minuscule on the same page, see Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 572, fol. 40r. Photographs of Bodley 572 can be found online at <<http://image.ox.ac.uk>>. On the palaeography of Latin written in Square minuscule see D. Ganz, 'Square Minuscule', *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Vol. I, c. 400-1100*, ed. R. Gameson (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 188–196.

⁵⁴ D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (London, 1986), p. 9.

⁵⁵ A.J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1990), p. 176.

⁵⁶ K. Sisam, 'Humfrey Wanley', in his *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 259–277 (at 277).

precision. Being an example of the earlier script chronologically, the hand of Scribe 2 merits treatment first.

Anglo-Saxon Square Minuscule: Scribe 2

As noted above, Scribe 2 writes a late example of Square minuscule that Dumville describes unambiguously as ‘rather crude’.⁵⁷ If Dumville’s sub-classifications of Square minuscule are accepted (and they do not have to be accepted in their entirety for them to be useful), Scribe 2 is writing Phase V. This is particularly clear if the hand is compared to London, BL, Stowe Charter 28 (s. x²; S 1211).⁵⁸ As in any transitional period in the history of scripts – taking in this instance a model of evolutionary rather than managed change – the boundaries between the last examples of Square minuscule and English (or Anglo-Saxon) Vernacular minuscule are not always clear.⁵⁹ We do well to remember, as David Ganz reminds us, that ‘scribes not scripts are at the heart’ of palaeographical study.⁶⁰ What from one perspective is seen as crude can, from another perspective, be described as transitional.

As a late example of Square minuscule, Scribe 2’s hand retains the proportions of its model but two letters (**a** and **e**) are written in forms that might be considered transitional. Despite the fact that in other respects Scribe 2 shows ‘very few indications of eleventh-century developments’, the presence of these transitional forms allows the hand to be considered an example of what Peter Stokes calls ‘Style-II English Vernacular minuscule’.⁶¹

57 D.N. Dumville, ‘Beowulf Come Lately’, p. 50. Cf. D.N. Dumville, ‘*Specimina codicum palaeoanglicorum*’, *Collection of Essays in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Institute of Oriental and Occidental Studies* [= unnumbered special ed. of *Bull. of the Inst. of Oriental and Occidental Stud., Kansai Univ.*] (Suita, Osaka, 2001), pp. 1–24, at 10.

58 On Phase V, which awaits full treatment in Dumville’s promised final paper on Square minuscule, see D.N. Dumville, ‘English Square Minuscule Script: the Mid-Century Phases’, *ASE* 23 (1994), 133–164, at 155, n. 122. Dumville gives the following as examples of Phase V: London, BL, Harley Charter 43, C. 2 (s. x²; S 697); BL, Stowe Charter 28 (s. x²; S 1211); Dorchester, Dorset Record Office, D. 124 (s. x²; S 736).

59 Dumville uses the adjective ‘Anglo-Saxon’ (*‘Specimina’*, p. 11). P.A. Stokes, as the title of his monograph makes clear, prefers ‘English’. See his *English Vernacular Minuscule from Æthelred to Cnut c. 990–c. 1035*, Publ. of the Manchester Centre for AS Stud. 14 (Cambridge, 2014).

60 Ganz, ‘Square Minuscule’, p. 190.

61 The distinction between two styles of English Vernacular minuscule is Stokes’s. In his typology, Style I is characterised as ‘tall’ and ‘narrow’ and Style II as ‘Square-influenced’. For a précis of Style I, see *English Vernacular Minuscule*, p. 119.

Peter Stokes notes the following about Style II which, as it sets the terms of my discussion of Vitellius Scribe 2, deserves to be quoted in full:

If Style-I Vernacular minuscule represents change, then Style II could be said to represent continuity. Rather than being a deliberate script-style which was practised throughout Anglo-Saxon England, this second style is characterised more by the principle of retaining much of the aspect and many letter-forms from the tenth century and includes the hands which Neil Ker described as 'late' forms of, 'manifest descendant[s]' of, or 'influenced by' Square minuscule. Many localisable examples of Style II are from Canterbury or its orbit, although the scripts written there are by no means uniform. Nevertheless, identifiable letter-forms include flat topped a and æ, horned a, æ, and o, a rounded and often closed g, and concave-down backs of d and ð. Thicker pens were often used, and the hands often lack the extended ascenders and descenders of Style-I Vernacular minuscule.⁶²

Scribe 2's form of a is clearly square and has a top-stroke placed between forty and forty-five degrees to the base-line. Stokes observes that in the transition to Vernacular minuscule: 'Flat-topped a was replaced by the teardrop-shaped form, in some cases via an intermediate with a straight but angled top-stroke; a similar process occurred for æ'.⁶³ This flat-topped form is maintained when Scribe 2 writes the digraph æ and the biting form of e+a (e.g. *craeftē deað* fol. 181r/2, Fig. 12), although the tall e in æ and e+a is a tenth-century feature. Occasionally, there are examples of a more rounded a in which the back of the letter is formed at an angle of seventy degrees, becoming almost the classic single-compartment form (e.g. *heortan* fol. 183r/18, Fig. 13; *gefondad* fol. 187v/4). Neither a, æ, or e are horned although they may sometimes have a slight protrusion at the left shoulder as a result of a hesitant approach to the letter (as, for example, in the first o of *dohtor* fol. 181r/9, Fig. 12) or from a rapidly-executed ductus (cf. Fig. 15). At times the protrusion appears not unlike the 'intermediate form [of e] with round body and very small horn' which, if I have read him correctly, Stokes sees in the main hand of Cambridge, UL, Ff. 1. 23 (s. xi^{med}) (e.g. the second e of *feore*, fol. 198v/20, Fig. 14).⁶⁴ The letter g is round and always closed to a loop, even if the tip of the tail thins as the pen is lifted. The form of

⁶² Ibid., p. 162.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 188.

⁶⁴ P.A. Stokes, 'English Vernacular Script, c. 990–c. 1035', 2 vols. (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Cambridge Univ., 2006) II, 1.

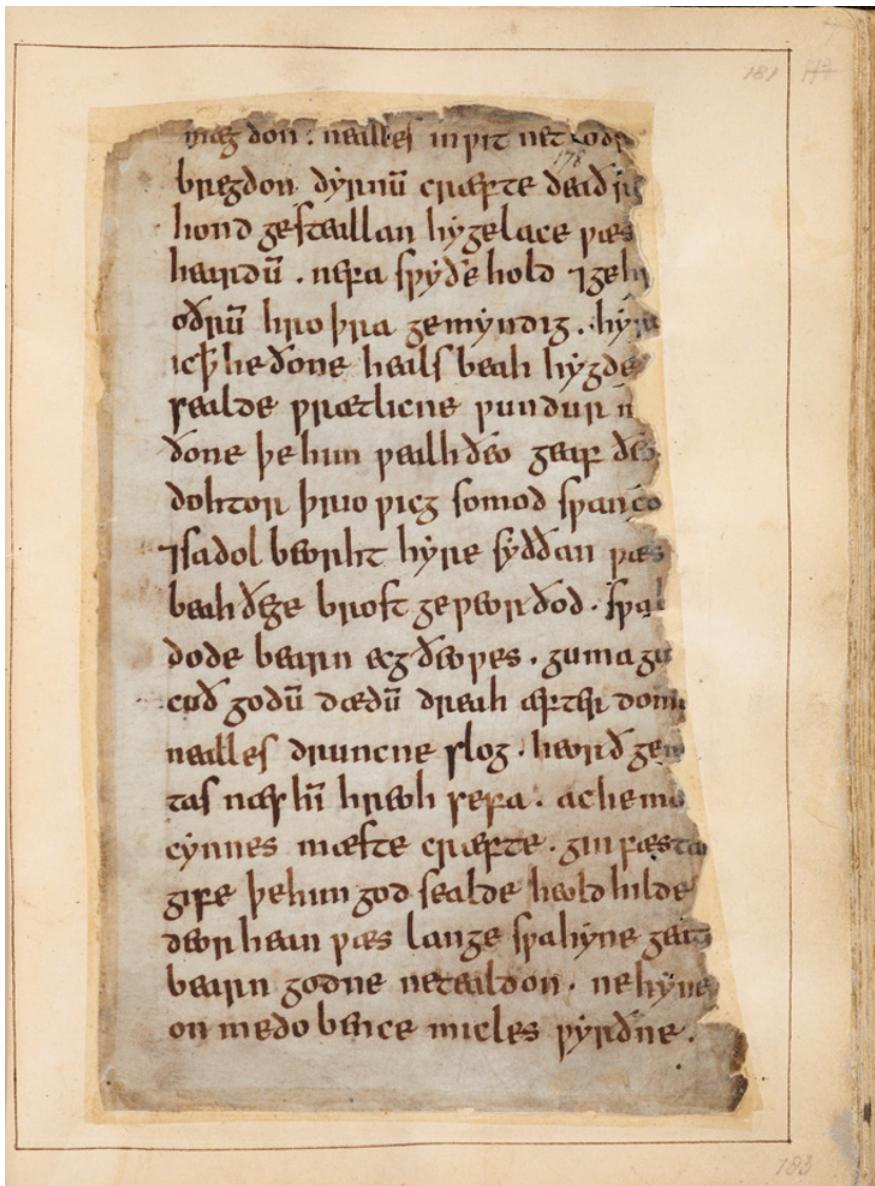


FIGURE 12 Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 181r



FIGURE 13

Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 183r/18



FIGURE 14

Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 198v/20

d is round-backed and the back of the letter leaves the body at between twenty-five (where it is essentially bilinear) and forty-five degrees (e.g. *goda* fol. 202v/18 and *aldor* fol. 202v/19, Fig. 15; cf. Fig. 12). It is the form of the letter which Stokes calls ‘concave-down’ and resides somewhere between Patrick Conner’s Forms II and III of **d**.⁶⁵ In common with Phase-II hands, Scribe 2 employs a thick pen. Although extended ascenders and descenders are generally avoided, they appear erratically like unruly thickets (e.g. *brydlicost* fol. 196r/10, Fig. 16) which adds to the perception that Scribe 2 was no master.

In conclusion, Scribe 2’s hand is, as Ker described it, a ‘late type of square Anglo-Saxon minuscule’.⁶⁶ It retains many characteristic features – particularly in its proportions, frequent e ligatures, the use of both round and long s, low r and dotted straight-limbed y – but in its forms of a and e is the work of a scribe influenced by Style-II Vernacular minuscule around him.

Style-I English Vernacular Minuscule: Scribe 1

In comparison to Scribe 2, the proportions of Scribe 1’s hand are elongated vertically. This is effected by extended ascenders with triangular wedges, particularly in b, h and l, less regularly in þ (Fig. 17), and a corresponding lateral compression of the minim-based letters – h, m, n and low r, but not u (Fig. 17) – in relation to the x-height (i.e. the ‘frame’ of any given letter is less square and more rectangular). Thus, the defining characteristic of Style-I English Vernacular minuscule is its ‘tall and narrow proportions’.⁶⁷ Moreover, Scribe 1 meets all of Stokes’s criteria for this script:

65 P.W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: a Tenth-Century Cultural History*, Stud. in AS Hist. 4 (Woodbridge, 1993), p. 65.

66 Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 282.

67 Stokes, *English Vernacular Minuscule*, p. 79.

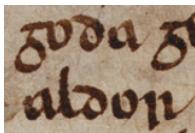


FIGURE 15

Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 202v/18 & 19

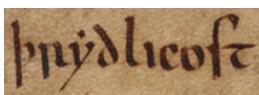


FIGURE 16

Scribe 2. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 196r/10

Style-I English Vernacular minuscule is characterised by long ascenders and descenders, a thin pen, long s, teardrop-shaped or very round a, an open and often angular tail of g, and frequent use of straight-limbed, dotted y.⁶⁸

Scribe 1's form of a is teardrop-shaped rather than round; the g is open and markedly angular in the mid-section, which leaves the head of the letter in a thin stroke at 45 degrees; long s and straight, dotted y are almost everywhere in evidence although round y may be found (e.g. ymb, fol. 132r/9).

However, the significance of Scribe 1's work is not as an example of Style-I English Vernacular minuscule but rather in its conjunction with the hand of Scribe 2. It is this to which the discussion must turn.

The Significance of Distinct Scripts in Vitellius A. xv

The only other manuscript in which Style-I Vernacular minuscule is followed by 'late forms of Square minuscule' is Cambridge, Trinity College R. 5. 22, fols. 72-157a (s. x/xi).⁶⁹ Stokes is correct to note that the conjunction of these scripts in both Vitellius A. xv and Trinity R. 5. 22 'argue[s] strongly against any notion of grade at this time' and I would like to develop his observation further.⁷⁰

The grade of a script, related directly to a document's function, is central to the descriptive systems of G.F. Lieftinck and Julian Brown.⁷¹ A 'higher' grade is indicated by a thicker pen and letters formed with a greater number of pen-lifts and strokes. The more 'current' (or, less precisely, 'cursive') a hand may be, the less it is lifted from the writing surface; the more 'set', the greater number

68 Ibid., p. 119.

69 Ibid., p. 94.

70 Ibid., p. 199.

71 See J.P. Gumbert's development of Lieftinck in 'A Proposal for a Cartesian Nomenclature', *Essays Presented to G.I. Lieftinck*, ed. J.P. Gumbert and M.J.M. de Haan, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, 1972-1976) IV, 45-52. Also, J. Brown, 'The Irish Element in the Insular System of Scripts to circa AD 850', in his *A Palaeographer's View: the Selected Writings of Julian Brown*, ed. J. Bately, M.P. Brown and J. Roberts (London, 1993), pp. 201-220.

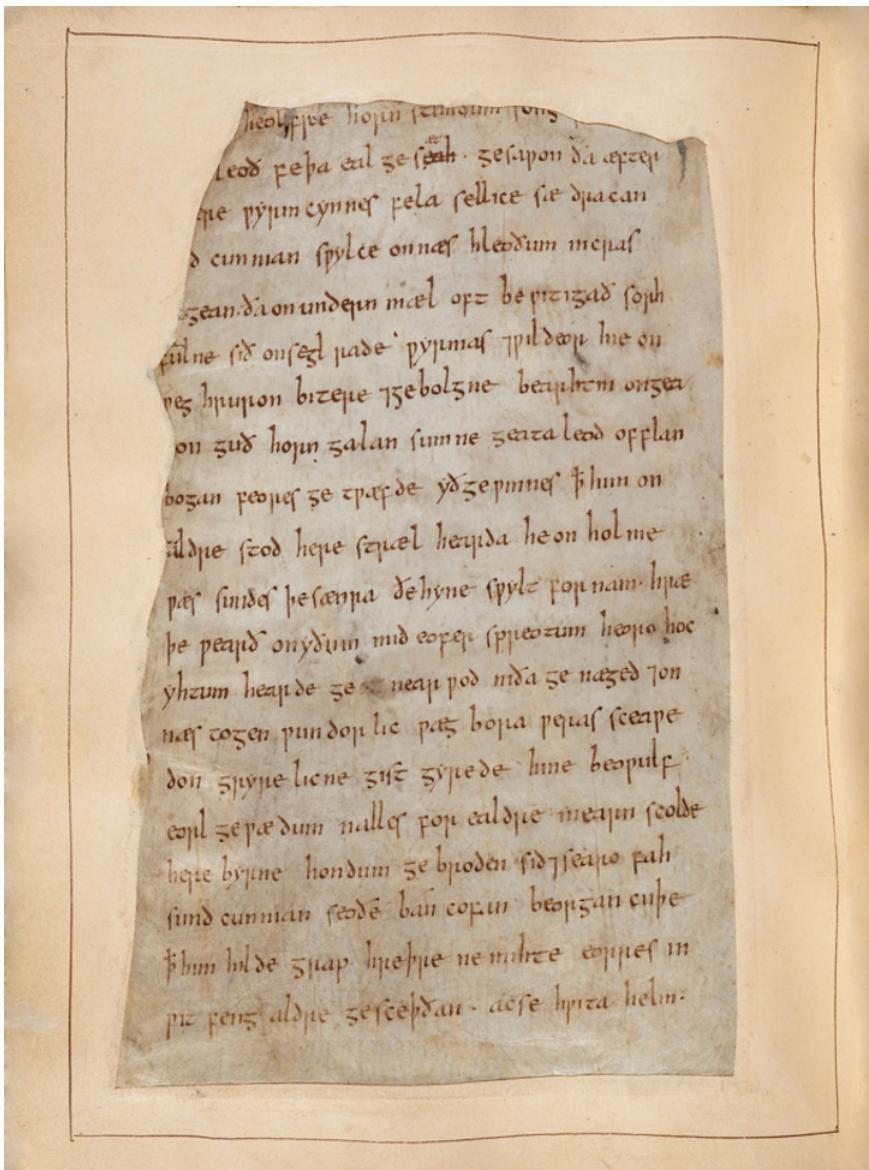


FIGURE 17 Scribe i. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fol. 164v

of strokes required per letter. Formal serifs add to the number of pen-lifts required in any given letter. Thus, in the Anglo-Saxon script system, Bibles, psalters and certain early legal documents like London, BL, Cotton Ch. Aug. ii. 2 (s. vii²; S 8) were written in half-uncials that indicated both their status and the associated functions of prestige. Less prestigious items, both books and documents, were written in a script of the 'lower' grades. If these distinctions

were applied to Vitellius A. xv, Scribe 2's late Square minuscule would be of a higher grade than Scribe 1's Style-I Vernacular minuscule. How much the adjectives 'higher' and 'lower' reflect the values originally assigned to the commodities they describe, and how much they represent our contemporary perspective, is not a question that can be answered here; it is sufficient to note the issue. But while the idea of a hierarchy of scripts may remain useful for discussions earlier and later in the medieval period, it seems less so at the beginning of the eleventh century. The evidence of Vitellius A. xv and Trinity R. 5. 22 signals not difference in script function made visible by grade, but functional equivalence (i.e. either script suffices for a book of this type).

Both manuscripts have scribal stints which change in the middle of a syntactical unit. There is little accommodation made for the transition in Vitellius A. xv (Fig. 10), but in Trinity R. 5. 22 the succeeding scribe handles it with considerable aesthetic sophistication. The change occurs on the fifteenth line of fol. 11ov after the second instance of *swa* (*7 swa bylwite swa | culfran*) (Fig. 18).⁷²

The new scribe writes habitually in a larger module, with a thicker pen, and with more pronounced ascenders and descenders. At the point of transition, however, the scribe imitates the module of the previous hand and gradually builds the proportion of the letters in a subtle crescendo over the following lines until the full module is reached. This technique preserves a sense of visual balance across two facing pages (fols. 11ov/11r) so successfully it is no surprise that M.R. James was unable to see change of hand.⁷³

The ingenious scribal crescendo in Trinity R. 5. 22 is a virtuoso performance. But, once noticed, his attempt to smooth the transition between the two scripts draws attention to the very thing it is intended to disguise. For things that are the same do not require a transition or a segue between them; things that are different, do. As already noted, the very fact that Square and Vernacular minuscules are juxtaposed suggests that there is no hierarchy of scripts at this time. Vernacular minuscule is functionally equivalent to Square minuscule; if it were otherwise, they would not be used together within the body of a single text. So it is not the case that the apparently blunt or clumsy juxtaposition of scripts in the *Beowulf* manuscript indicates a lack of scribal awareness, or of aesthetic skill. What we see is a functional aesthetic in which two scripts cor-

⁷² The transition is marked in the margin with the pencil annotation 'Hand B' and a right oblique dividing the words. The annotation might be the hand of Neil Ker; it reminds me of annotations in some volumes from his personal library now in the Palaeography Room at the University of London.

⁷³ James noted that '[t]he hand gets gradually larger and of later type: the most decided change seems to be at f. 116 after which is not much alteration' (*The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1900–4) II, 192).

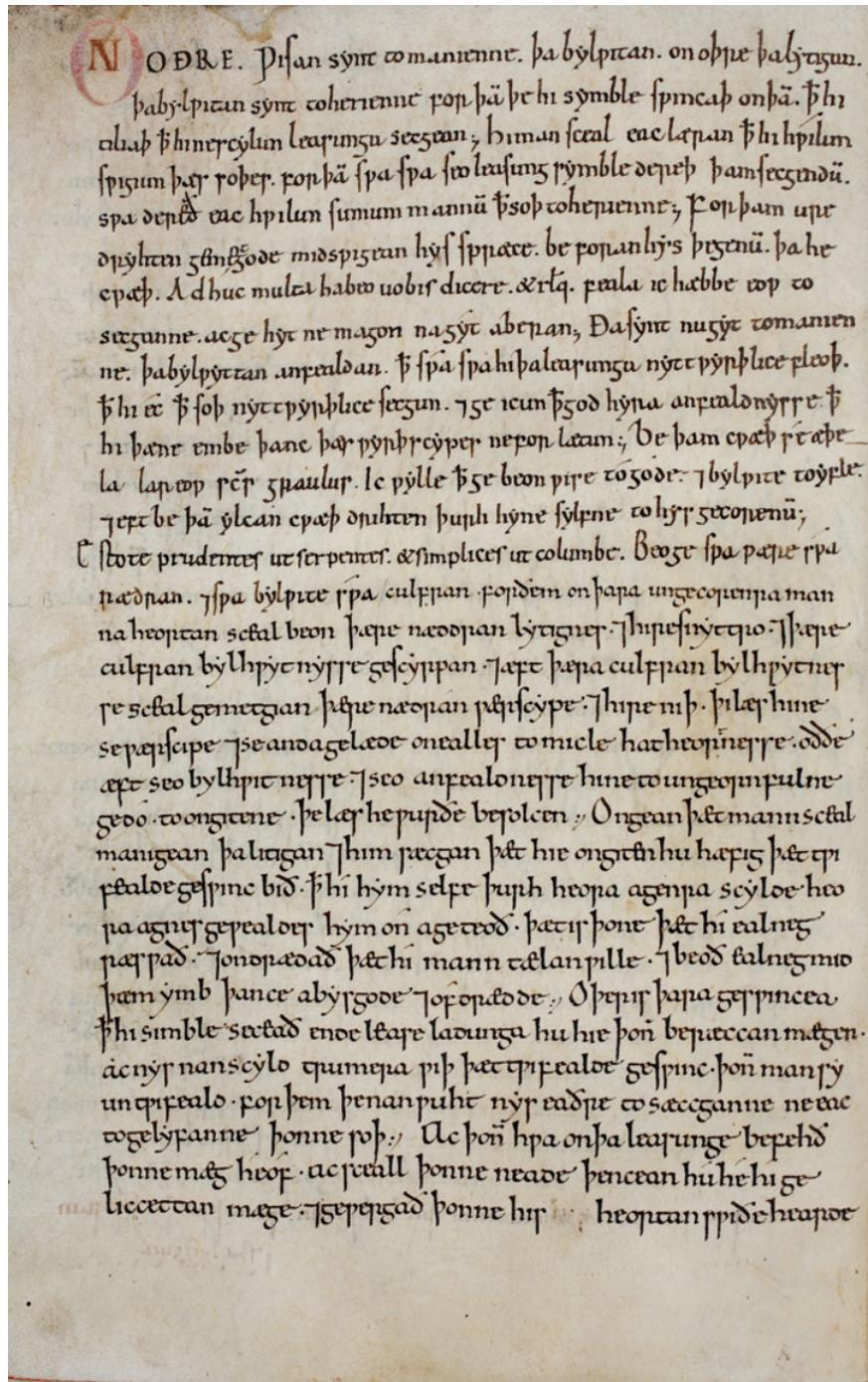


FIGURE 18 Cambridge, Trinity College R. 5. 22, fol. nov

respond *de facto*. Modern readers might find this difficult to accept – perhaps because the ingenuity of the Trinity scribe is closer in some respect to a modern aesthetic – but it would be a category error to read the Vitellius scripts as if their presentation were somehow less sophisticated than in Trinity R. 5. 22. As is often the case with a virtuoso technical flourish, the Trinity scribe makes something out of nothing and the effect is redundant. For as the Vitellius scribes well knew, it is not necessary to impose sameness on scripts that are already equivalent.

Read in conjunction with one another, then, the work of the Vitellius A. xv scribes loses some of the negative significance with which it has been imbued. Individually they are specimens of script types in an historical continuum; together, as Dumville rightly showed, their presence in the same manuscript allows us to date the codex with relative precision from a palaeographical perspective. However, the fact of their juxtaposition does not justify the criticisms levelled at the codex as a whole. Failure to grasp this is the reason it is easier to refer to the damaged state of the codex, to the sloppiness of the scribes as copyists, or to the inadequacy of the hands rather than attend to what the palaeography itself might tell us. To do such raises questions about the limits of Anglo-Saxonism and whether at times it does not – rather like the Trinity scribe – make a rhetorical something out of nothing.

Codicology

The Consensus Quires

The codicology of Vitellius A. xv has been a matter of considerable discussion since the publication of '*Beowulf*' and the '*Beowulf*' Manuscript in 1981, as noted above. Codicological discussions may seem recondite but the place of *Beowulf* within Vitellius A. xv is critically important for any reading of the codex or the *Wonders of the East*. Five basic collations have been proposed for Vitellius A. xv – by Förster, Dobbie, Ker, Malone, and Kiernan.⁷⁴ In 1981 Boyle published a detailed codicological analysis which agreed with Ker; the later analyses of

⁷⁴ M. Förster, *Die 'Beowulf'-Handschrift*, Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Liepzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse 71.4 (Leipzig, 1919), pp. 22–23; E.V.K. Dobbie, '*Beowulf*' and *Judith*', ASPR 4 (London, 1954), p. xv; Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 282; Malone, *Nowell Codex*, p. 16; Kiernan, *B&BM*, p. 126.

Richard W. Clement (published in 1984) and Gerritsen (published in 1998) concur with Malone.⁷⁵ The collations are summarized in Table 1.

It should be noted that the collation attributed to Kiernan in the table is his first. In 1982 he revised his view slightly to collate quires five to seven thus: 5⁸, 5a², 6⁸ 3 + 6 are half-sheets, 7⁸ 3 + 6 are half-sheets. The bifolium 5a between the fifth and sixth quires is intended to correct the presence of an anomalous ten-sheet quire in the previous collation.⁷⁶ The effect remains the same, however, since *Beowulf* is still claimed to start a new quire, albeit with a bifolium requisitioned from another four-sheet gathering.

It may be seen that there is complete agreement about the make-up of only three of the fourteen gatherings (i.e. quires 3, 4 and 14). The quires containing the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* (fols. 118–125 [quire 3] and 110–117 [quire 4]) have traditionally been taken to constitute the third and fourth gathering since they are misbound in the present arrangement of the manuscript. The fourteenth quire contains the acephalous text of *Judith*. It is arranged with all sheets hair-side out in the same manner as the last two quires of *Beowulf*. From this evidence, Scribe 2 would seem to have prepared his quires from five bifolia, it being more logical to presume the loss of the external bifolium from the fourteenth quire than the loss of a half-sheet attached at the end as Dobbie proposed.⁷⁷ Quires 9 to 11 are from the *Beowulf* portion of the manuscript. For Förster and Dobbie the ninth quire begins at fol. 161; for Ker and those following him, it starts on fol. 158. The gatherings proposed by the earlier scholars must be incorrect since fols. 166–173 are ruled for twenty-two lines. Thus the gathering of eight proposed by Förster and Dobbie (fols. 161–168) would require fols. 161–163 to be conjugate with fols. 166–168. While it is conceivable that Scribe 1 was sophisticated enough to rule, or re-rule, three bifolia with different grids on each folio, it is easier to believe that the twenty-two line folios were ruled together and so constitute the tenth quire. All three quires are thus taken to follow Ker's "normal"

75 See L.E. Boyle, 'The Nowell Codex and the Poem of *Beowulf*', *The Dating of 'Beowulf'*, ed. C. Chase, Toronto OE ser. 6 (Toronto, 1981), pp. 23–32; R.W. Clement, 'Codicological Considerations in the *Beowulf* Manuscript', *Essays in Med. Culture: Proc. of the Illinois Med. Assoc.* 1 (1984), 13–27; J. Gerritsen, 'British Library ms Cotton Vitellius A. xv – a Supplementary Description', *ES* 69 (1988), 293–302, at 297–299.

76 See Kiernan, *B&BM*, p. xxiii and Clement, 'Codicological Considerations', p. 18, n. 5. This second foliation is the one Kiernan adopts in the supplementary disc to the second edition of *Electronic Beowulf*. The bifolium is labelled 'Vi' before quire 'VII' (which, in the majority opinion, is the sixth). The last quire (actually the fourteenth) is mislabelled 'XIII'.

77 Dobbie, '*Beowulf*' and *Judith*', p. xv.

TABLE 1 *Collations of London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fols. 94–209*

	Förster	Dobbie	Ker/Boyle	Malone, Clement & Gerritsen	Kiernan
Q. 1	1 ⁸ (fols. 94–101)	1 ¹⁰ (fols. 94–103)	1 ⁸ (fols. 94–101)	1 ¹⁰ (fols. 94–103)	1 ¹⁰ (fols. 94–103)
Q. 2	2 ⁸ (fols. 102–9)	2 ⁶ (fols. 104–9)	2 ⁸ (fols. 102–9)	2 ⁶ (fols. 104–9)	2 ⁶ (fols. 104–9)
Q. 4	3 ⁸ (fols. 110–7)	3 ⁸ (fols. 110–7)	3 ⁸ (fols. 110–7)	3 ⁸ (fols. 110–7)	3 ⁸ 3 + 6 are half-sheets (fols. 110–7)
Q. 3	4 ⁸ (fols. 118–25)	4 ⁸ (fols. 118–25)	4 ⁸ (fols. 118–25)	4 ⁸ (fols. 118–25)	4 ⁸ 3 + 6 are half-sheets (fols. 118–25)
Q. 5	5 ⁸ (fols. 126–33)	5 ⁸ (fols. 126–33)	5 ⁸ (fols. 126–33)	5 ⁸ (fols. 126–33)	5 ⁶ (fols. 126–31)
Q. 6	6 ⁸ (fols. 134–41)	6 ⁸ (fols. 134–41)	6 ⁸ (fols. 134–41)	6 ⁸ (fols. 134–41)	6 ¹⁰ 5 + 8 are half-sheets (fols. 134–43)
Q. 7	7 ⁸ + one leaf after 7 (fols. 142–50)	7 ⁸ + one leaf after 7 (fols. 142–50)	7 ⁸ (fols. 142–9) after 7 (fols. 142–50)	7 ⁸ (fols. 142–9)	7 ⁸ (fols. 142–9)
Q. 8	8 ¹⁰ (fols. 151–60)	8 ¹⁰ (fols. 151–60)	8 ⁸ (fols. 150–7)	8 ⁸ (fols. 150–7)	8 ⁸ (fols. 150–7)
Q. 9	9 ⁸ (fols. 161–8)	9 ⁸ (fols. 161–8)	9 ⁸ (fols. 158–65)	9 ⁸ (fols. 158–65)	9 ⁸ (fols. 158–65)
Q. 10	10 ⁸ (fols. 169–76)	10 ⁸ (fols. 169–76)	10 ⁸ (fols. 166–73)	10 ⁸ (fols. 166–73)	10 ⁸ (fols. 166–73)
Q. 11	11 ⁸ (fols. 177–84)	11 ⁸ (fols. 177–84)	11 ⁸ (fols. 174–81)	11 ⁸ (fols. 174–81)	11 ⁸ (fols. 174–81)
Q. 12	12 ⁸ + one leaf after 7 (fols. 185–93)	12 ⁸ + one leaf after 7 (fols. 185–93)	12 ¹⁰ (fols. 182–91)	12 ¹⁰ (fols. 182–91)	12 ¹⁰ (fols. 182–91)
Q. 13	13 ⁸ (fols. 194–201)	13 ⁸ (fols. 194–201)	13 ¹⁰ (fols. 192–201)	13 ¹⁰ (fols. 192–201)	13 ¹⁰ (fols. 192–201)
Q. 14	14 ⁸ (fols. 202–9)	14 ⁸ [+ one lost leaf after 8] (fols. 202–9)	14 ⁸ (fols. 202–9)	14 ⁸ (fols. 202–9)	14 ⁸ (fols. 202–9)

procedure' with only Gerritsen and Clement disagreeing.⁷⁸ The ninth and eleventh quires are ruled for twenty lines but when Scribe 2 takes over from Scribe 1 in the eleventh, matters change. Between fols. 177v–179r Scribe 2 writes twenty-one lines in the space Scribe 1 needed for twenty, before returning to the original format at fol. 179v.

The first ten folios of Vitellius A. xv were misbound at an earlier point in its life, as an old foliation on the top right of the parchment recto demonstrates. Malone (with Gerritsen following him) and Kiernan have both provided speculative explanations to account for the shuffled leaves and for the catchword on fol. 101v.⁷⁹ Kiernan's theory has perhaps more credibility – it would be decidedly odd to bind five sheets in the manner suggested by Malone – but only proof of non-conjugate leaves could invalidate either theory. To these discussions, it is possible to add from my own observation that the outer sheets exhibit irregularity in ruling which suggests they were conjugate and ruled together. (The average distance between lines is 9 mm. measured from the hair-side of the parchment and from the base of one line to the base of the line below it). Thus, fols. 94r/103v, 95r/102v and 96r/101v share a distance between lines nine and ten of 10 mm. and between lines twelve and thirteen of 8 mm. It should also be noted that fols. 103 and 104 show the same heavy ruling, most obviously in the space occupied by the illustrations. The two inner sheets (fols. 97/100 and fols. 98/99) display a different set of rulings with a 10 mm. space between lines seventeen and eighteen. Considering this, I agree that the best reconstruction of the first quire is as a ten, i.e. five bifolia, the bifolia ruled in one group of three and one group of two, and finally arranged hair-side out.

Given the misplacement of the third and fourth quires, the second must be a quire of six leaves. Kiernan, Clement and Gerritsen agree that the arrangement of the bifolia is HF HF FH.⁸⁰ All three bifolia are ruled on the flesh side, diverging from the 'normal procedure' of hair-side ruling.⁸¹ They

78 I.e. the quire is arranged HF, FH, HF, FH, HF, FH, HF, FH (Ker, *Catalogue*, p. xxiii). See the collations on the supplementary disc of Kiernan's *Electronic Beowulf*. Gerritsen prefers HF, FH, FH, HF, FH, HF, HF, FH for quires ten and eleven, raising the possibility that the second sheet of these quires is an addition ('Supplementary Description', p. 298). Clement has quires nine and ten as examples of the 'normal procedure' and offers the same collation as Gerritsen for quire eleven. I am very grateful to Mr Clement for sending me his quiring diagrams by email.

79 Malone, *Nowell Codex*, p. 15; Gerritsen, 'Supplementary Description', p. 297; Kiernan, *B&BM*, pp. 131–132.

80 Gerritsen, 'Supplementary Description', p. 299; Kiernan, *Electronic Beowulf*.

81 See n. 78 above.

also agree that the third and fourth quires were a gathering of three bifolia expanded to eight leaves by the addition of half-sheets at the third and sixth positions.⁸² Since fols. 112r/115r and 120r/123r are flesh sides, these pairs cannot be conjugate: the arrangement of the sheets in both quires is thus HF FH FH HF FH FH HF FH. There is little else in the structure of these quires to puzzle. The collation of them, in marked difference to those that follow, is quite uncontroversial.

The Contested Quires

When discussing the collation of the *Beowulf* portion of Vitellius A. xv, the nub of Kiernan's analysis is best summarized by him:

Scholars have always assumed that the gathering following the transposed quires was a four-sheet quire, which makes *Beowulf* an inseparable part of the prose codex that precedes it, since *Beowulf* begins on the seventh leaf of this four-sheet quire. Now there is no reason to make this assumption. On the contrary, there is good reason to believe that the last gathering of the prose codex was another three-sheet gathering, which was all that was needed to finish *Alexander's Letter*. The exciting corollary of this conclusion is that the *Beowulf* part of the Nowell Codex once existed as a separate codex.⁸³

As one reviewer commented, '[t]his hypothesis can be no more than a possibility' because, in the words of a second, '[t]he arrangement of hair and flesh sides of the vellum lends itself to either interpretation'.⁸⁴ In fact, Kiernan and Gerritsen are in complete agreement concerning the hair-flesh arrangement of these two quires, excepting only the half-sheet at fol. 139, for which Kiernan gives the recto as hair and Gerritsen as flesh.⁸⁵

Kiernan's argument for his collation is based on five premises, each of which may be addressed in turn. The first is that the great librarian and palaeographer, Humfrey Wanley (1672-1726), 'speaks of the poem as if it were a

82 Kiernan, *Electronic Beowulf*; Gerritsen, 'Supplementary Description', p. 299.

83 Kiernan, *B&BM*, p. 126.

84 N.F. Blake, untitled review of '*Beowulf*' and the '*Beowulf*' Manuscript by K.S. Kiernan, *ES* 179 (1983), 72-75, at 73; R.D. Fulk, 'Dating Beowulf to the Viking Age', review of *The Dating of 'Beowulf'*, ed. by C. Chase, and '*Beowulf*' and the '*Beowulf*' Manuscript by K.S. Kiernan, *Philological Quarterly* 61 (1982), 341-359, at 350.

85 Kiernan, *Electronic Beowulf*; Gerritsen, 'Supplementary Description', p. 299.

separate book'.⁸⁶ In the entry for Vitellius A. xv in his *Catalogus historicocriticus*, Wanley starts the summary of *Beowulf* with the phrase '*In hoc libro*'.⁸⁷ However as Fulk correctly states, '*liber* and *codex* do not mean the same thing, and Wanley observes the difference throughout his catalogue'.⁸⁸ Had Wanley meant to describe the *Beowulf* portion as a separate codicological unit, we might reasonably expect the phrase *In hoc codice* rather than *In hoc libro*.

Secondly, Kiernan claimed that on the bottom of fol. 132r – the opening page of *Beowulf* – there appear the letters '*Vi (tellius) A 15*'. The *-tellius* is entirely rubbed off, but the *Vi-* and *A 15* are still quite readable, even in the FSS'.⁸⁹ However, what Kiernan describes is not clear in the facsimiles, or in the manuscript itself. He later revised the opinion in a subsequent article, stating that the 'obvious explanation' was that '*Vi*' still constituted a quire signature but this time as the Roman numeral six and not a pressmark identifier.⁹⁰ Gerritsen countered by noting that Kiernan's claim is 'unsupported by the presence of any further member of such a series', that it 'does not have the final *i-longa* [long i, i.e. *vj*] that one might reasonably expect in a series of quire signatures at this date, and 'denies the presence of traces of further writing'.⁹¹ These two letters provide precious little for the codicologist to work with. One may only assert with Kiernan that they constitute 'direct codicological evidence' if one is convinced *a priori* that fol. 132 begins a new quire.⁹²

His third contention is that the bottom right-hand corner of the same folio shows damage 'caused by sweat and friction, from gripping the ms by the corner; the area of the damage is restricted to the space a thumb would occupy'.⁹³ There is visible damage to fol. 132/18 under the words *scyldes eafera*. However Kiernan's proposal that the stain comes from the thumb-mark of a sloppy reader might equally be used against his assertion for the separate life of *Beowulf*, for the mark does not correspond to a grip used in

86 Kiernan, *B&BM*, p. 133.

87 The *Catalogus* is the second volume of George Hickes's *Linguarum vett. septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archaeologicus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1793–1795) II, 219.

88 Fulk, 'Dating Beowulf', p. 351; cf. Clement, 'Codicological Considerations', p. 19.

89 Kiernan, *B&BM*, p. 133.

90 K.S. Kiernan, 'A Long Footnote for J. Gerritsen's "Supplementary" Description of BL Cotton MS Vitellius A. xv', *ES* 72 (1991), 489–496, at 496; cf. *B&BM*, p. xxii, n. 15.

91 J. Gerritsen, 'A Reply to Dr Kiernan's "Footnote"', *ES* 72 (1991), 497–500, at 500.

92 Kiernan, 'Long Footnote', p. 495.

93 Kiernan, *B&BM*, p. 134.

carrying these folios as an independent unit. But if, however, it was part of a composite codex the mark might correspond to a reader's right thumb, mirroring the position of a left thumb when holding the book open. However since all thoughts on the matter are purely speculative, they cannot constitute any serious evidence for the codicologist.

Fourthly, he claimed that the heavy rulings on fol. 132r are not matched with a comparable set on fol. 127v, i.e. the sheet with which it would be conjugate if the fifth quire were a straightforward gathering of eight. In defence of this point, Kiernan subsequently published a diagram showing the permutations in which fols. 132 and 133 could have 'the "same" rulings as the preceding gathering and still begin a new quire'.⁹⁴ This is a small, but no doubt sincere, sleight of hand. It does not consider the possibility of re-ruling or the evidence of ruling across bifolia. The rulings on fol. 132 are noticeably heavier than the others in the quire, especially so on the verso (i.e. the flesh side), and Kiernan is correct in noting there are no comparable rulings are visible on fols. 127 or 128. But these observations do not support the conclusion that 'the first leaf of *Beowulf* and the preceding leaf were ruled independent of one another'.⁹⁵

Gerritsen tentatively suggests that these rulings, along with those on fol. 131r (also the flesh side), are 'secondary'.⁹⁶ My own analysis of the evidence of fol. 131r/10, where the horizontal ruling exceeds the bounding line but is not mirrored in an adjacent folio, suggests that the second and third sheets were ruled separately. The patterns of ruling across bifolia support this. For example, the bifolia fols. 126/133 and 127/132 exhibit a 10 mm. distance between the bottom two lines of text against an average of between 8.4 mm. and 8.7 mm. in the rest of the text-block. The pattern changes with the third sheet (fols. 128v/131r) which shows a more regular 9 mm. between the same lines against an average of 8.8 mm. The innermost sheet (fols. 129/130) returns to 10 mm. against 8.9 mm. Thus, fol. 132 was re-rulled, as one might expect for the start of a new text, and the bifolium fols. 128/131 appears to have been ruled separately from fols. 126/133 and 127/132. Whether the rulings on fol. 131r are secondary, or whether the inner sheet was ruled with the first two, the evidence will not permit us to conjecture.

To this may be added a brief discussion of the text-block, also from my own examination of the manuscript. Assuming the fifth quire to be an eight, the

94 Kiernan, 'Long Footnote', p. 495.

95 Ibid., p. 495.

96 Gerritsen, 'Supplementary Description', p. 300.

length of text-block is regular over the conjugate sheets (measured from the bottom of the first line to the bottom of the last):

Folios	Measurement
126 / 133	170 mm. / 171 mm.
127 / 132	170 mm. / 171 mm.
128 / 131	167 mm. / 167 mm.
129 / 130	170 mm. / 170 mm.

Assuming the quire to be a six, however, produces an anomaly which needs explaining:

Folios	Measurement
126 / 131	170 mm. / 167 mm.
127 / 130	170 mm. / 170 mm.
128 / 129	167 mm. / 170 mm.

Despite the ungainly variation across the bifolia, the second sheet does not replicate the ruling of the outer one as Kiernan asserts and which is a key element in his collation.

Lastly, Kiernan asserts that the misplacement of fol. 149 after the first two leaves of *Beowulf* (i.e. after fol. 133) was possible only after the damage to Cotton's library in the fire at Ashburnham House of October 1731 and before Thorkelin's second transcript, dated 1787 by the Icelandic scholar.⁹⁷ Regarding this, it need only be noted with Gerritsen that 'Thorkelin, like his amanuensis before him, copied 149 in its proper place without the least sign of disturbance'.⁹⁸

Following quires five and six, the collation has proved uncontroversial. Writers from Ker onwards have concurred that Scribe 1 prepared quires of eight and Scribe 2 quires of ten. Scribe 2's quires are all arranged with the hair-side outward, unlike Scribe 1 who constructed his irregularly. Kiernan and Gerritsen

97 Kiernan, *B&BM*, pp. 134–139.

98 J. Gerritsen, 'The Thorkelin Transcripts of *Beowulf*: a Codicological Description, with Notes on their Genesis and History', *The Library* 13, 6th ser. (1991), 1–22, at 11, n. 19.

concur regarding the hair-flesh arrangement, albeit with the former accusing the latter of plagiarism.⁹⁹

Given the evidence above, I follow Malone and Clement with Gerritsen's comments on the singletons. To employ Gerritsen's phrase, the 'likeliest hypothesis' is that Vitellius A. xv may be collated as follows:¹⁰⁰

$1^{10}, 2^6, 3^8$ (3 and 6 are half-sheets), 4^8 (3 and 6 are half-sheets), 5^8 ,
 6^8 (3 and 6 are half-sheets), 7^8 (3 and 6 are half sheets), $8-11^8, 12-13^{10}, 14^8$

Beowulf therefore forms part of the same codex as the prose pieces.

The only remaining question is whether *Judith* is an addition. The matter has been comprehensively addressed by Peter Lucas and it is necessary here only to address the codicological objection to *Judith* being original to the codex.¹⁰¹ *Judith*, Kiernan asserts, 'was not ruled to fit the same format as the *Beowulf* codex. The same marked discrepancy exists between the prose codex and the *Judith* fragment, which is reason enough to reject the idea that *Judith* was formerly bound at the beginning of the Nowell Codex'.¹⁰² In reply, Lucas notes that Kiernan's measurement of the text-block in quire 14 is 'not observable'.¹⁰³ From my own measurement of the manuscript, I agree with Lucas that Kiernan's measurements are erroneous. It is reasonable therefore, as John Pickles asserted in 1971, to construct a hypothetical order of the manuscript as 'x quires + *Judith* + x quires + *Christopher* + *Wonders* + *Letter* + *Beowulf*'. Pickles continues: 'There is nothing improbable about the unknown quantities marked x, for the manuscript today is not bulky, nor would it have been had it once been half as long again'.¹⁰⁴

The 'Wonders' in Vitellius A. xv: 'Speaking Beyond the Light'

With the *Wonders of the East* now securely in their codicological context, they may be read accordingly. The thematic unity of Vitellius A. xv has already

⁹⁹ Kiernan, 'Long Footnote', p. 496; Gerritsen, 'Supplementary Description', p. 299.

¹⁰⁰ Gerritsen, 'Supplementary Description', p. 298.

¹⁰¹ P.J. Lucas, 'The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf*-Manuscript', *RES* 41 (1990), 463–478.

¹⁰² Kiernan, *B&BM*, p. 151.

¹⁰³ Lucas, 'Place of *Judith*', p. 470, n. 21.

¹⁰⁴ J.D. Pickles, 'Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Cambridge Univ., 1971), p. 9. Lucas does not cite Pickles's thesis but their conclusions are the same. Cf. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 4, n. 25.

been discussed and Kathryn Powell has put forward, for the moment at least, the most persuasive reading of this subject.¹⁰⁵ What remains striking about the Vitellius *Wonders*, especially when compared to the versions in Tiberius B. v and Bodley 614, is the absence of an explicit Christian interpretative frame. The lack of Jamnes and Mambres and the Isidorian additions, leaves the Vitellius *Wonders* closest to the epistolary tradition from which it derives than to those versions which follow.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the lack of an epistolary frame – which in the *Letter of Pharasmenes* employs pagan protagonists – removes from the *Wonders* the interpretative possibilities provided by the ‘noble pagan’ motif, potentially a rich theme in a codex containing stories of Beowulf and Alexander the Great. Instead, the *Wonders* is a catalogue, without even the presence of figures who, if not quite narrators, provide a structuring function in the *Liber monstrorum* or *Physiologus*.¹⁰⁷

Catalogues presume the existence of stable objects for description; or, should the objects themselves be unstable, they imply a stable subject constructing and consuming them. The *Wonders* does not exhibit the structure presupposed by the term catalogue and is thus closer in form to a list; but the principle still applies. I suggest that the form of the *Wonders*, particularly in Vitellius A. xv, is thereby so mismatched to its contents that they are undermined by it. Moreover, this is one of the reasons – in addition to those discussed in the following chapters – why the later versions are overtly Christianized. I wish to explore this by reference to a mistranslation in the Old English *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* which was not noted by Douglas Butturff nor has been, to the best of my knowledge, by any other commentator.¹⁰⁸

After the trees of the Sun and the Moon foretell his death, Alexander returns to them to inquire who will kill him. Answering Alexander in his own language they refuse to give him a name but specify that his death will be by poison. Further, his mother will perish ignobly (*þurh scondlicne deadð 7 unarlicne*) but his sisters are promised *longe gesæliges lifes*. The trees then instruct Alexander not to ask further questions: *Ac ne frign ðu unc nohtes ma ne*

¹⁰⁵ See n. 6, above.

¹⁰⁶ On the *Wonders* and the epistolary tradition see A. Knock, ‘Wonders of the East: a Synoptic Edition of *The Letter of Pharasmenes* and the Old English and Old Picard Translations’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of London, 1982).

¹⁰⁷ A similar point concerning catalogues is made by K. Powell, ‘The Anglo-Saxon Imaginary of the East: a Psychoanalytic Exploration of the Image of the East in Old English Literature’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Notre Dame, 2002), p. 117, n. 31.

¹⁰⁸ D.R. Butturff, ‘Style as a Clue to Meaning: a Note on the Old English Translation of the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*’, *ELN* 8 (1970), 81–86.

*axa, for þon wit habbað oferhleoðred þæt gemære uncres leohtes, ac to Fasiacen 7 Porre þaem cyninge eft gehworfþu.*¹⁰⁹ This image of ‘speaking beyond one’s light’ is the result of a serendipitous mistranslation. In the source text the Latin reads: *Nunc modo cave, ne nos ulterius scisciteris; inde excede terminos luci nostri et ad Fasiacen Porumque revertere.*¹¹⁰ The Old English translator appears either to have worked from a copy which preserved the reading *lucis* (genitive singular of *lux*), or he took *luci* (dative singular of *lux*; genitive singular of *lucus*) to be a scribal error since the dative would not be found in this position. Either way, in this context the reading created by the translator is resonant and suggestive in its own right.¹¹¹

Like the trees in the *Letter*, the *Wonders* speaks of things beyond the ‘grove’ of the reader’s lived experience and necessarily beyond the ‘light’ necessary to comprehend them. Marvels, outlandish by their nature, are not open to encounter and consequently cannot be narrativized from the reader’s life. Because the *Wonders* presents its subjects in the form of a list, which relies upon its capacity for inter- and paratextual association to generate meaning, each marvel is less than the sum of the whole. De-narrativized, decontextualized, a simple list of wonders empties itself of meaning in the very act of iteration.

Unlike Tiberius B. v or Bodley 614, which frame the *Wonders* as an encyclopaedic or mythographic text, Vitellius A. xv invites its readers to engage with the *Wonders* as a literary document. But where the *Wonders* succeeds in these other manuscript contexts, it ultimately fails in Vitellius A. xv. Its genre, reliant upon association to generate meaning, underscores what Powell calls ‘the curious absence of signs of God’ in the text and forces us back to the manuscript itself as an interpretative frame.¹¹² But even when the anxieties created by Vitellius A. xv have been assuaged – the illustration understood not as aberrant, but as part of a continuum; the palaeography accepted on its own terms,

¹⁰⁹ ‘But do not question or ask the pair of us any more, for we have spoken beyond the limit of our light, but turn back to Fasiacen and King Porus’ (OE text and translation from Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 252–253).

¹¹⁰ ‘Now only take care not to question us further: go out from here, from the boundaries of our grove and return to the Fasis and Porus’ (text from W. Boer, ed., *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem*, BKP 50, rev. ed. (Meisenheim am Glan, 1973), p. 51; translation is from L.L. Gunderson, *Alexander’s Letter to Aristotle about India*, BKP 110 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1980), p. 154).

¹¹¹ That groves were so called because they had little light was a common etymological explanation: *appellatur lucus quod minime luceat* (R.P.H. Green, ed. and trans., *Augustine. De doctrina Christiana*, OECT (Oxford, 1995), p. 172; cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* I.xxix.3).

¹¹² Powell, ‘Anglo-Saxon Imaginary’, p. 103.

rather than studied with eyes informed less by scholarship than by the arts and crafts movement; the codicology revealed to be coherent in a way which does not privilege *Beowulf* – the literary capacity of the *Wonders* remains fatally undermined. As bibliographical form effects meaning, so does literary form. A literary form dependent on its bibliographical context to generate meaning, however, may not succeed in every context. In Vitellius A. xv the forms are fatally mismatched. The wonders of the *Wonders of the East* do indeed speak beyond their light, but without signalling their own interpretative contexts, they speak to where there is only darkness.

The Wonders and the *Computus* Manuscript

London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. v

Introduction

When London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v was exhibited in the 1980s, the editors of the accompanying catalogue noted that it is ‘one of the most lavishly illustrated non-liturgical books to have come down to us from the early Middle Ages’.¹ Tiberius B. v is certainly grand in scope, impressive in its general execution and heavy with the weight of the authors it preserves: Ælfric’s *De temporibus anni* (fols. 24r–28v); an illustrated copy Cicero’s *Aratea*, with gloss (fols. 32v–49v); Priscian’s *Periegesis* (fols. 57r–73r); the *Wonders of the East* (fols. 78v–87v); and other computistical, historical and genealogical texts.² The quantity and quality of its illustrations are indeed remarkable for a non-liturgical book and the texts themselves, while not remarkable individually or as groups, together form an unusual combination. However we have no sure knowledge of its first owner or patron. It has been assigned both to Winchester and to Christ Church, Canterbury.³ I believe, following David Dumville, that

¹ J. Backhouse, D.H. Turner and L. Webster, ed., *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art, 966–1066* (London, 1984), p. 158.

² A star map and an illustrated copy of Hrabanus Maurus’s *De laudibus sanctae crucis* are now lost from the volume. On the history of Tiberius B. v, see P. McGurk, D.N. Dumville, M.R. Godden and A. Knock, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library Cotton Tiberius B. v, Part 1, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Nero D. II*, EEMF 21 (Copenhagen, 1983), pp. 25–27. When the manuscript was in the possession of John Lumley (1534–1609), it contained the Hrabanus, which was presumably removed by Robert Cotton (1571–1631). See S. Jayne and F.R. Johnson, *The Lumley Library: the Catalogue of 1609* (London, 1956), p. 162. Humphrey Wanley’s contribution to George Hickes’s *Thesaurus Grammatico-criticus* noted the following, which no longer survives, as the 43rd item in the description of Tiberius B. v: *Planisphaerium, in quo Signa & Constellationes cœlestes delineationibus antiquis & non inelegantibus representantur*. See Hickes’s *Linguarum vett. septentrionalium thesaurus grammatico-criticus et archaeologicus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1793–1795) II, 215–217 (at 216).

³ In *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, Michael Lapidge assigns Tiberius B. v variously to Christ Church, Canterbury, or to Canterbury generally, or to Winchester (Oxford, 2006, pp. 297, 320–321, 325 and 327). Helmut Gneuss added Canterbury as a possible origin in the revised version of his handlist (*Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: a List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, Med. and Renaissance Texts and Stud. 241 (Tempe, AZ, 2001), p. 69).

the Canterbury attribution is a reasonable hypothesis and propose a reading of the codex that derives from it.⁴

Because there are no other Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the same scope to which it might easily be compared, the question what kind of codex Tiberius B. v might be quickly presents itself. The editors of the facsimile edition called it a ‘miscellany’ and this seems to have stuck.⁵ Such a designation is, however, open to the criticism that the term ‘hinders our efforts’ to understand such codices because they were ‘seldom “miscellaneous” for the audiences or individuals that produced, read, and used them’.⁶ To call Tiberius B. v a computistical manuscript – as I will do – is to stop treating it as part of a catch-all category of manuscripts whose coherence we may not particularly understand. Instead we can focus on it as a volume within a mainstream tradition in medieval book production and frame the question of its ‘unusualness’ against a defined group of manuscripts rather than against the corpus of eleventh-century books as a whole.

Faith Wallis has identified a ‘classic shape to a *computus* manuscript, centred on the Paschal table and the solar calendar, surrounded by their explanatory tables and texts’.⁷ Although she does not specify examples of this ‘classic’ model, it would appear that Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 291 (St Augustine’s, Canterbury; s. xi/xii) may be taken as a fair, if late, example of the type. As Charles Jones noted,

⁴ D.N. Dumville, ‘The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists’, *ASE* 5 (1976), 23–50. See especially the stemma presented as Figure 1 (p. 46). The attribution to Christ Church is necessarily speculative. I do not see the capitalization of Swithun on fol. 21r as a reason for suspecting that Tiberius B. v was made ‘for Winchester at Christ Church, Canterbury’ (p. 28).

⁵ McGurk et al., *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*; cf. Andy Orchard’s description of Tiberius B. v as a ‘geographical miscellany’ (*Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monasteries of the ‘Beowulf’-Manuscript*, rev. ed. (Toronto, 2003), p. 20). In the conclusion to the facsimile, McGurk schematizes the manuscript as follows: ‘The following categories embrace the contents of the Tiberius miscellany though clear dividing lines between them are not easy to draw: *geographical*, the *Marvels*, Sigeric’s journey to Rome, the stations at Rome, the zonal map, Priscian’s translation of *Periegesis* and the *mappa mundi*; *scientific*, the computistical matter, Ælfric’s *De temporibus anni*, and the *Aratea*; *historical*, the lists, episcopal, regnal and other, and the genealogies; and *ecclesiastical*, the calendar which was closely associated with the computistical items, and the lost Raban Maur’s *De laude crucis*’ (McGurk et al., *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, p. 107).

⁶ B.A. Shailor, ‘A Cataloger’s View’, *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. S.G. Nichols and S. Wenzel, *Recentiores* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1996), pp. 153–167 (at 167).

⁷ F. Wallis, ‘MS Oxford St John’s College 17: a Medieval Manuscript in its Context’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Toronto, 1985), p. 18.

however, 'the mediaeval *computus* was not an exclusive form'.⁸ Wallis observes that two general types of computistical manuscript are derived from this 'classic' model and calls the first 'centrifugal'. In a manuscript of this type, computistical charts and their explanatory texts have been separated. The charts are then commonly attached to liturgical volumes while the computistical texts 'take refuge in anthologies of mathematical, physical or astronomical materials'. In contrast to this, she also proposes a 'centripetal' model in which 'the classic core of tables and texts can attract a more or less extensive halo of satellite topics'.⁹ Tiberius B. v is clearly an example of the latter.

The Origin and Audience of Tiberius B. v

The body of surviving *computus* manuscripts has many strands by virtue of the 'encyclopaedic potentiality' of the material.¹⁰ There is, however, one aspect of Tiberius B. v that provides a clue to the interpretation of this particular manuscript. Its grand expansiveness invites contemplation: not contemplation of the glory of the next world promised by *de luxe* liturgical books but contemplation of this present, material world. It is as if the *Wonders*, the *computus*, the astronomy and the geography make Tiberius B. v an elaborate gloss on, or point of access to, the 'book of nature'.

If it is correct to observe that Tiberius B. v invited such contemplation, it did so for a religious community with a high level of residual orality and for whom the practice of reading and contemplation was inseparable from the material objects that regulated it. This immediately presents a paradox of a spiritual or transcendent realm reached *through* the material world. The observations of Daniel Miller, a material anthropologist, concerning the culture of a Christian population in present-day Zimbabwe are helpful for understanding Anglo-Saxon England: the Christian impulse 'toward immateriality brings out the inherent contradiction that follows from the impossibility of ever transcending the process of objectification itself. *Just as there is no pre-objectified culture, there is no post-objectified transcendence!*'¹¹

⁸ Bedae *Opera de temporibus*, ed. C.W. Jones, Pub. of the Med. Acad. of Amer. 41 (Cambridge, MA, 1943), p. 76.

⁹ Wallis, 'Oxford St John's College 17', p. 18.

¹⁰ F. Wallis, 'The Church, the World, and the Time: Prolegomena to a History of the Medieval *Computus*', *Normes et pouvoir à la fin du moyen âge*, ed. M.-C. Déprez-Masson, Inedita & Rara 7 (Montreal, [1989]), pp. 15–29 (at 21).

¹¹ D. Miller, 'Materiality: an Introduction', *Materiality*, ed. D. Miller (Durham, NC, 2005), pp. 1–50 (at 22); emphasis added.

The challenge of Tiberius B. v is to analyse it in this nexus, to attempt to reconstitute its object-status for the community which used it. An analysis of this sort can only begin historically.

The Danish sack of Canterbury in September 1011, during which the cathedral was burned, and the subsequent murder of Archbishop Ælfheah in 1012, has been described as a 'shattering blow to English morale'.¹² That the library of Christ Church suffered severely, either in the initial attack or during the months following as the Danes wintered in Canterbury, can hardly be in doubt: books, and especially their bindings, were valuable booty. The ransoming for Christ Church of the Stockholm 'Codex Aureus' during the ninth century is an eloquent example of their value to both raider and raided.¹³ The disaster of 1011–1012 was not a permanent setback, however. Christ Church was rich and well-endowed with manors; by the time of the Domesday survey, Christ Church had the third largest income of any English monastery after Glastonbury and Ely.¹⁴ The Christ Church scriptorium evidently recovered under the rule of Archbishops Lyfing (1013–1020) and Æthelnoth (1020–1038). For example, during the 1020s the scribe Eadwig – known from his colophon in a Gospel book now preserved at Hanover and identified first by T.A.M. Bishop – was producing some very high-grade work.¹⁵ As Richard Gameson notes:

A striking feature of Eadwig's extant oeuvre is the high status of most of the projects on which he worked. He copied particularly important charters, adding a couple of them to prestigious gospel books, and he was himself responsible for, or contributed to, a series of *de luxe* manuscripts. In view of this, it seems likely that he held a high – quite possibly

¹² N. Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066*, Stud. in the Early Hist. of Britain (Leicester, 1984), p. 285.

¹³ Stockholm, Kungliga Biblioteket, A. 135 (s. viii^{med}). For a discussion see R. Gameson, *The Codex Aureus: an Eighth-Century Gospel Book*, EEMF 28–9, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 2001–2002) I, 75–7 and the reproduction of fol. 11r.

¹⁴ See the map of estates acquired between 988 and 1066 in Brooks, *Early History*, p. 284. Also D.C. Douglas's introductory essay to *The Domesday Monachorum of Christ Church, Canterbury* (London, 1944). On the wealth of England generally see P.H. Sawyer, 'The Wealth of England in the Eleventh Century', *TRHS* 15, 5th ser. (1965), 145–164 and M.R. Godden, 'Money, Power and Morality in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 19 (1990), 41–65 on the ambiguous nature of the monastic response. For the relative income of Christ Church see Appendix vi in D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 702–703.

¹⁵ Hanover, Kestner-Museum, WM XXIA, 36.

pre-eminent – position in the Christ Church scriptorium in the generation after the Viking sack of Canterbury (1011).¹⁶

Cnut's courting of the English church to consolidate his power after 1016 benefited Christ Church and its scriptorium. T.A. Heslop identified the patronage of Cnut and Emma as a key factor in the production of *de luxe* manuscripts of the period, including some of those produced at Christ Church.¹⁷ The surviving evidence consists of liturgical manuscripts, Gospel books (*texti*) and relics; but there is nothing to suggest that any other type of book was part of the programme of royal patronage. There is no parallel here to Athelstan's donation to the monks at Chester-le-Street of a non-liturgical volume containing the *Vita S. Cuthberti*.¹⁸ Since *Tiberius B. v* cannot be linked to this or to a following campaign of patronage, two further options need to be considered: either the volume was produced in Christ Church for monastic consumption, or it was produced there (possibly by commission) for a lay person. The bilingualism of the *Wonders* and, as we shall see, the importance given to the *mise-en-page* in some of the illustrated sections might suggest a non-monastic audience, or at least one less familiar with Latin. This notwithstanding, *Tiberius B. v* contains nothing textually or materially to link it to an audience beyond the monastery. Conversely, the abstruse computistical materials (fols. 2v–19r) imply a religious rather than lay audience, as do the list of bishops (fols. 20v–22r) and the account of Sigeric's pilgrimage to Rome (fols. 23v–24r). Combined with the lack of other direct evidence, this leaves little option but to assign *Tiberius B. v* a place in the monastic library of Christ Church. The challenge is not to find an alternative audience to account for *Tiberius*'s 'unusual' nature but to account for that 'unusualness' adequately in a monastic context.

¹⁶ R. Gameson, 'The Colophon of the Eadwig Gospels', *ASE* 31 (2002), 201–222, at 203. See also D.N. Dumville, *English Caroline Script and Monastic History: Studies in Benedictinism, AD 950–1030*, Stud. in AS Hist. 6 (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 111–140. An incisive analysis of the problems with some of Dumville's assumptions are presented in T.A. Heslop's review of this volume in *JTS* 45, n.s. (1994), 378–381.

¹⁷ T.A. Heslop, 'The Production of *de luxe* Manuscripts and the Patronage of King Cnut and Queen Emma', *ASE* 19 (1990), 151–195.

¹⁸ Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 183 (934 × 939). See S. Keynes, 'King Athelstan's Books', *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 143–201 (at 180–185).

Reading Books and the Monastic Library

When we think now of a reading book, we think most often of a small to medium-sized volume light enough to be held, or perhaps resting on the reader's lap or propped on a table. More often than not the reader is seated, solitary, and reads silently. Some modern books, a paperback novel for example, might signify a high level of disposability; others, perhaps an academic textbook or professional report, are simply one method among others to convey data. We might occasionally use a volume which is not designed to be read cover to cover – an artist's book, a 'coffee-table' volume of photography, or a dictionary. In each case the experience of reading is essentially private and interiorized. To an Anglo-Saxon monk, however, reading had a more communal character. There were times when a monk read alone – in the *lectio divina* prescribed by St Benedict's rule, as part of his administrative duties if he were of sufficient rank, perhaps as a scribe, or in private prayer – but a significant portion of a monk's reading was either during mealtimes, when some instructive text was read to the brothers, or else it was liturgical.¹⁹ As Ælfric wrote: *Et sciendum quod tota bibliotheca debet legi in circulo anni in ecclesia, sed quia nos pigri serui sumus et segnes, legimus in refectorio quicquid de ea in ecclesia omittimus.*²⁰

There were no libraries as we currently think of them. Liturgical books were stored either in the sacristy or at the altar.²¹ Others volumes were kept in *armaria*, locked chests or cupboards, which in turn were stored in communal areas, most often the cloister. There is post-Conquest evidence from Canterbury which shows that *armaria* were secured each evening by the claustral prior. Despite the destruction of the pre-Conquest cathedral by fire in December 1067, there is no reason to consider this practice one of Archbishop Lanfranc's continental innovations.²² As Gameson notes, '[t]he first proper cloister known to have been built in England is that of Edward the Confessor's Westminster Abbey, whereafter it became a standard feature of English

¹⁹ See c. 38 of the *Benedicti Regula*. To listen gladly (*libenter audire*) to these readings was one of the *instrumenta bonorum operum* (*Benedicti Regula*, ed. R. Hanslik, CSEL 75 (Vienna, 1960), pp. 97–99 and 35 respectively).

²⁰ 'And be it known that, in the course of a year, the entire canon ought to be read in church, but because we are lazy and slothful servants, we read in the refectory whatever we do not cover in church' (C.A. Jones, *Ælfric's Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, CSASE 24 (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 148–149).

²¹ F. Wormald, 'The Monastic Library', *The English Library before 1700*, ed. F. Wormald and C.E. Wright (London, 1958), pp. 15–31 (at 16).

²² *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. D. Knowles; rev. by C.N.L. Brooke, OMT (Oxford, 2002), pp. 114–115.

monasteries...’²³ In comparison with the later Middle Ages, however, there is little direct evidence from the Anglo-Saxon period concerning book storage.²⁴ The earliest use of *armarium* recorded in Latham’s dictionary is in the ‘Antwerp Glossary’ where OE *boochord* is given as a gloss for *bibliotheca*, *uel armarium*, *uel archium*.²⁵ Whether this refers to a simple book chest or a cupboard of the classical type like the much-discussed ‘Ezra miniature’ of the ‘Codex Amiatinus’, the point remains the same.²⁶ Books were stored communally but not in anything approaching the library rooms of the later medieval period.

The Benedictine Rule gives a privileged place to reading, especially during Lent, as can be seen in the famous passage from Chapter 48: *Otiositas inimica est animae; et ideo certis temporibus occupari debent fratres in labore manuum, certis iterum horis in lectioне diuina...In quibus diebus quadragesimae accipient omnes singulos codices de bibliotheca, quos per ordinem ex integro legant; qui codices in caput quadragesimae dandi sunt.*²⁷ Brothers, whose reading time averaged four hours per day, were superintended as they read by one or two of the senior brothers to ensure they were not lazy or causing a disturbance.²⁸ The hours between matins and prime were assigned throughout the year to learning psalmody and Scripture lections or to *meditatio*, Benedict’s ‘general term for reading and prayer and the exercises of the spiritual life’.²⁹ During summer, the tenth-century *Regularis concordia* prescribed reading of this sort *in claustro* (c. 54); or, when it was too cold, monks were permitted to read inside

²³ R. Gameson, ‘The Medieval Library (to c. 1450)’, *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*, gen. ed. P. Hoare, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 2006) I, 13–50 (at 18).

²⁴ J.W. Clark, *The Care of Books*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1909), p. 72. See also D. Ganz, ‘Anglo-Saxon England’, *Cambridge History of Libraries* I, pp. 91–108 (at 91–93); and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Library*, pp. 60–62.

²⁵ *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. R.E. Latham *et al.*, 17 vols. (London, 1975–2013). The ‘Antwerp Glossary’ is preserved in Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum, M. 16. 2 + London, BL, Add. 32246 (s. xiⁱⁿ). The gloss in question can be found on fol. 20v of the London portion.

²⁶ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatino 1, fol. Vr (before 716). For a reproduction see M.P. Brown, *Manuscripts from the Anglo-Saxon Age* (London, 2007), pl. 22.

²⁷ ‘Idleness is an enemy of the soul. Because this is so the brethren ought to be occupied at specified times in manual labour, and at other fixed times in holy reading...During these Lenten days let each one have some book from the library which he shall read through carefully. These books are to be given out at the beginning of Lent’ (*Benedicti Regula* XLVIII.i, xv–xvi, pp. 114 and 117. The translation is G.F. Gasquet’s in *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (London, 1936), pp. 84 and 86).

²⁸ *Benedicti Regula* XLVIII.xvii–xviii. See C. Butler, *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule*, 2nd ed. (London, 1924), p. 287.

²⁹ Butler, *Benedictine Monachism*, p. 279. For the provision, see *Benedicti Regula* VIII.

near a fire (c. 29).³⁰ Ælfric made a similar prescription: *Et si frigoris nimetas incubuerit, in domo legant omnes simul et canant. Sin autem temperies tranquilla aderit, sedeant pariter omnes in claustro.*³¹

Whether in the cloister or the refectory, the predominantly communal character of monastic reading shaped a relationship between reader and text defined more by the oral element than our own. Even in private, as Malcolm Parkes reminds us, '[r]eading aloud, or at least *sotto voce*, was also practised during the monastic *lectio* to instil into the reader an aural and muscular memory of the words as a basis for *meditatio*'.³² The effect of this form of reading is profound. Walter Ong puts it succinctly: 'Sight isolates; sound incorporates. Whereas sight situates the observer outside what he views, at a distance, sound pours into the hearer'.³³ To read by sight alone - if indeed it were possible during this period - would be to reverse that process. It is this tension between the silence and simultaneity of sight and the sound of the oral-literate consumption of text that we see exploited in Tiberius B. v.

The Materiality of Tiberius B. v

Returning to Tiberius B. v specifically, what evidence can be adduced to support the theory of it as an object of non-liturgical contemplation? There is first the fact of its size. At 260 × 220 mm. after fire damage, Tiberius B. v is one of the largest English *computus* manuscripts. Of English *computus* manuscripts dating from the tenth to twelfth centuries, only Cambridge, St John's College A. 22 (s. xii, 1132?; 280 × 190 mm.) and London, BL, Royal 12 F. ii (s. xii; 270 × 175 mm.) are taller, with Tiberius B. v being wider than both.³⁴ If Tiberius B. v originally had the same proportions as these manuscripts (i.e. 1:0.67 or 0.64) it would be approximately 330 mm. tall and easily the largest. Fire damage makes it impossible to say with certainty what its proportions might have been but considering

³⁰ *Regularis concordia Anglicae nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque*, ed. T. Symons (London, 1953), pp. 53 and 26 respectively. Here the Latin *claustrum* has a more general meaning than it developed later.

³¹ 'And should the severe cold persist, let them all read and chant together in the domus. But should the weather be mild, let them all sit together in the cloister' (*Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, pp. 116–117).

³² M.B. Parkes, 'Readan, Areccan, Smeagan: how the Anglo-Saxons Read', *ASE* 26 (1997), 1–22, at 9.

³³ W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word*, New Accents (London, 1982; repr. London and New York, NY, 1990), p. 72.

³⁴ Dimensions from Wallis, 'Oxford St John's College 17', p. 32, n. 2.

its current proportions (1:0.85), it is more likely that Tiberius B. v was squarer in shape.

There are fifty manuscripts (including Tiberius B. v) listed in the index to Gneuss's *Handlist* under the broad heading *computus*.³⁵ Using Gneuss's 1985 survey of Anglo-Saxon liturgical books as a foil (but excluding his extra-liturgical categories of prayer-books and calendars) we can distinguish twenty-one non-liturgical items - i.e. neither service nor office books - of English origin containing *computistica*.³⁶ Not all of these, however, can be described accurately as *computus* books in the sense that they contain 'both the classic core of tables and texts'.³⁷

From this set four items can be excluded as too fragmentary to compare usefully with Tiberius B. v.³⁸ Three present interesting possibilities of comparison but must also be excluded since they contain charts but no explanatory treatises.³⁹ Two further manuscripts comprise the *Enchiridion* of Byrhtferth of Ramsey (*c.* 970–*c.* 1020) and the homiliary copied for Wulfstan II, bishop of Worcester from 1062–1095.⁴⁰ Neither fits the classic chart/text

35 Gneuss, *Handlist* nos. 26, 30.5, 36 [+344], 70, 85, 104, 111, 186, 230, 258, 282, 304, 306, 311, 321.5, 326, 333 + 342, 334, 363.2, 373, 378, 380, 392, 398, 400, 404, 407, 411, 435, 439, 440, 478.5, 483, 498.8, 526, 538, 541, 583, 585, 611, 612, 637, 740, 744, 888, 897, 912, 919.3, 921.

36 H. Gneuss, 'Liturgical Books in Anglo-Saxon England and their Old English Terminology', *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 91–141. The two categories are sections W and X of this article. I also take the liberty of re-classing Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii (Gneuss, 'Liturgical' G.3) as a prayer-book since the collectar is incomplete and does not appear to me to define the volume as whole. As has been noted elsewhere, this volume is 'more a personal manual of devotions than an official service-book' (Backhouse *et al.*, *Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 75). The twenty-one items that remain are: Gneuss, *Handlist* and 'Liturgical' nos. 26 (X.15), 85, 186 (X.16), 258, 282, 321.5, 326, 333 + 342 (W.2 + X.17), 380 (G.3), 398 (X.17), 404, 411, 435, 440, 478.5, 498.8, 526, 611 (X.19), 612, 637 (X.20) and 888 (X.21).

37 Wallis, 'Oxford St John's College 17', p. 18.

38 London, BL, Add. 23211 (Gneuss no. 282); Cotton Vitellius C. viii, fols. 22–5 (Gneuss no. 404); Sloane 1619, fol. 2 (Gneuss no. 498.8); and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 81, fols. 133–140 (Gneuss no. 612).

39 Cambridge, UL, Kk. 5. 32, fols. 49–60 (Gneuss nos. 26/X.15); London, BL, Harley 5431, fols. 4–126 (Gneuss no. 440); and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 7299, fols. 3–12 (Gneuss no. 888).

40 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole 328 (Gneuss no. 526) and Hatton 113 + 114 (Gneuss nos. 637–638/X.20).

model. Three codices have *computus* texts but no tables;⁴¹ and, lastly, one is more properly described as an astronomical, rather than computistical, volume.⁴²

Having excluded the above, we are left with the following eight volumes. In date order, they are:

- i. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 63 (867 × 892, northern England; 207 × 135 mm.; Gneuss nos. 611/X.19);
- ii. Cambridge, Trinity College R. 15. 32 (s. xiⁱⁿ/xi^l, ?Winchester, prov. St Augustine's, Canterbury; 216 × 152 mm.; Gneuss nos. 186/X.16);⁴³
- iii. London, BL, Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii (s. xi^l, calendar before 1029, New Minster, Winchester; 128 × 93 mm.; Gneuss nos. 380/G.3);
- iv. London, BL, Cotton Galba A. xiv + Cotton Nero A. ii, fols. 3–13 (s. xi², ?Winchester; c. 138 × 103 mm., fire-damaged + 160 × 115 mm.; Gneuss nos. 333/W.2 + 342/X.17)
- v. London, BL, Egerton 3314, fols. 9–72 + Cotton Caligula A. xv, fols. 120–153 (s. xi²–xi/xii, Christ Church, Canterbury; 225 × 167 mm. + 217 × 165 mm.; Gneuss no. 411)
- vi. London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xii, fols. 4–77 (s. xi^{ex}, Salisbury; c. 130–140 × 210–215 mm., fire-damaged; Gneuss nos. 398/X.12)
- vii. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 291 (s. xi/xii, St Augustine's, Canterbury; c. 253 × 162 mm.; Gneuss no. 85)
- viii. London, BL, Royal 12 D. iv (s. xi/xii, prov. Christ Church, Canterbury; 254 × 172 mm.; Gneuss no. 478.5)

Only Corpus 291 and Royal 12 D. iv compare in size to Tiberius's measurements of 260 × 220 mm. Both are likely to be Canterbury volumes: Royal 12 D. iv is unillustrated and has detailed annotations showing it was read by at

⁴¹ Exeter, Dean and Chapter Library, 3507 (Gneuss no. 258); London, BL, Harley 3271 (Gneuss no. 435), and Cotton Cleopatra A. vii, fols. 107–147 (Gneuss no. 321.5). The table of auspicious days for blood-letting headed *De Sanguine Minuere* on fol. 102 of Harley 3271 cannot be classed as computistical.

⁴² London, BL, Cotton Domitian i, fols. 2–55 (Gneuss no. 326).

⁴³ Trinity R. 15. 32 is actually a composite of two parts: pp. 13–26, comprising a calendar and paschal table, can be dated to 1035 or 1036. See P.R. Robinson, *Catalogue of Dated and Dataable Manuscripts c. 737–1600 in Cambridge Libraries*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1988) 1, 99. Also, T.A.M. Bishop, 'Notes on Cambridge Manuscripts, Parts II and III', *TCBS*, 2.2 (1955), 185–199, at 189–192 for a description and collation of the first three quires.

least two near-contemporary readers.⁴⁴ The Titus and Galba/Nero prayerbooks are portable volumes and the latter has a marked ‘personal’ and ‘informal’ character.⁴⁵ Similarly, Digby 63 has a personal character: it, too, is small enough to be portable and is written in a medium-grade current hand. Whether or not the priest-scribe Rægenbold of the colophon was the book’s first owner, it is clearly a reading book in a way that Tiberius B. v is not. The remaining three – Trinity R. 15. 32, Egerton 3314 + Caligula A. xv, and Vitellius A. xii – are more similar in character to Tiberius, although smaller in size and lacking the programmatic illustrations. That none of the eight shares the proportions of Tiberius B. v is significant when it is seen that in two sections the *mise-en-page* is designed to cohere across facing pages.⁴⁶

Page Design in Tiberius B. v

The ‘Wonders of the East’

The *Wonders* fills the whole of a quire of eight and continues into the first two leaves of the next. Each page is presented in double columns; the Latin is written first, then the English. In every section, except the gold-digging ants in the ninth, illustration follows text. McGurk notes that the rulings on the outer sheet of the first quire (fol. 78 and 85) are designed to accommodate illustrations but misjudge the amount of space needed for the text. Accordingly, the scribe writes to a smaller gauge.⁴⁷ The remaining leaves of the gathering provide insufficient evidence from which to establish the method of ruling but, nevertheless, were ruled for text alone. No other leaves in the *Wonders* show the same (mis)planning: once the principles of the *mise-en-page* were established, the remaining sheets could be ruled individually without space for illustration.

It is not hard to predict that any design scheme in which illustration follows text will lead, as the pages are turned, to the two elements becoming

44 See the annotations on fol. 34r and 81v in one hand and fol. 48r in another.

45 B.J. Muir, *A Pre-Conquest Prayer Book (BL MSS Cotton Galba A. xiv and Nero A. ii (ff. 3–13))*, HBS 103 (Woodbridge, 1988), p. xvi. Uniquely in this group, this manuscript appears not to have been planned completely before writing. It seems to have been an empty volume into which articles were written as required, almost in the manner of a later medieval commonplace book.

46 The proportions are: Digby 63 (1:0.65); Trinity R. 15. 32 (1:0.70); Titus D. xxv + xxvii (1:0.73); Galba A. xiv + Nero A. ii (1:0.75); Egerton 3314 + Caligula A. xv (1:0.74); Vitellius A. xii (1:0.65); CCCC 291(1:0.64); and Royal 12 D. iv (1:0.67).

47 McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, p. 34.

dislocated. In the Tiberius *Wonders*, this happens by the second set of facing pages (fols. 79v and 80r) where, at the top left of fol. 79v, an image of a double-headed serpent is separated from the description on the previous page (fol. 79r). In total, six of the nine pairs of facing pages present an image in the top left of the left-hand page which is separated from its text. It is not uncommon to find rubrics separated from the texts they announce but to my knowledge there are no other Anglo-Saxon examples of text as preamble or preparatory to the illustration.

If the usual relation is for the image to articulate its text, as seen clearly in the development of the bestiary from the ‘Bern Physiologus’ onwards, how might the inverted relationship of text and image be explained?⁴⁸ It is perhaps unlikely to be the result of adapting a monolingual single column exemplar. Patrick McGurk suggests that ‘T[iberius]’s adoption of two columns for the *Mirabilia* when it uses long lines almost everywhere else might point to an exemplar with two columns’ but reserves judgement on whether or not it was bilingual.⁴⁹ Ann Knock goes further to argue that the Vitellius *Wonders* was copied from a bilingual version ‘laid out in the same way as T[iberius]’.⁵⁰ Whether McGurk’s postulated versions put text before image in the manner of Tiberius B. v must remain speculation; similarly Ann Knock’s position, if accepted, requires the existence of some other manuscripts designed this way. If we consider the dislocation of text and image in the *Wonders* semiotically, however, it assumes new importance, by drawing attention to the successive character of text and the simultaneous, non-linear quality of image.

According to the Augustinian account available to Anglo-Saxon England, words convey meaning to a reader or listener when they combine that which is brought to mind from his or her memory: *Qui enim mihi narrat uerbi gratia aliquem montem silua exutum et oleis indutum, ei narrat qui meminerim species et montium et siluarum et olearum. Quas si oblitus essem, quid diceret omnino nescirem et ideo narrationem illam cogitare non possem* (*De trinitate*, XI.viii.14).⁵¹

48 Bern, Bergerbibliothek, 318 (s. ix). A facsimile is available in *Physiologus Bernensis: voll-Faksimile-Ausg. des Codex Bongarsianus 318 der Bergerbibliothek Bern*, ed. C. von Steiger and O. Homburger (Basel, 1964).

49 McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, p. 98.

50 A. Knock, ‘Wonders of the East: a Synoptic Edition of *The Letter of Pharasmenes* and the Old English and Old Picard Translations’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of London, 1982), p. 105.

51 ‘He who describes to me a mountain that is stripped of its forest and clothed in olive trees is speaking to one who remembers the forms of the mountains, the forests and the olive trees; had I forgotten them, I should not at all know what he was saying, and, therefore, I could not conceive that description’ (text, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini De trinitate libri xv*, ed.

Thus a reader may form an abstract notion of St Christopher from the text in Vitellius A. xv by remembering a dog's head and a human's body but the subsequent mental picture will always be generic. It operates at the level of type or possibility in much the same way as Augustine's image of the mountain. As such, words are inadequate because they cannot exhibit the reality they suggest, particularly when describing non-existent phenomena like *cynocephali*. As Augustine put it elsewhere: *Hactenus uerba ualuerunt, quibus ut plurimum tribuam, admonent tantum, ut quaeramus res, non exhibent, ut norimus (De magistro, XI.xxxvi).*⁵²

On the other hand, a manuscript image is a visual sign that presents information simultaneously: it is material, rather than a combination of pre-formed mental categories; specific, rather than generic; and non-linear, rather than successive. The reader encountering the image of a *cynocephalus* on fol. 8or of Tiberius B. v after reading about the same is thereby forced to switch codes. Using Augustine's terms and staying within the limitations of his account, the simultaneous and specific image is able to 'exhibit' what text cannot convey fully because text is always generic. The *mise-en-page* of the Tiberius *Wonders*, however, uses the disparity between the generic and the specific – between the abstract to the material, between textual and visual – codes in order to make its subject real. So it is that in the world of the *Wonders*, what does not exist is given reality by being made material.⁵³

W.J. Mountain with Fr. Glorie, CCSL 50–50A, 2 vols. (Turnhout, 1963) I, p. 351; translation, G.B. Matthews, ed., *Augustine. On the Trinity, Books 8–15*, trans. S. McKenna, Cambridge Texts in the Hist. of Philosophy (Cambridge, 2002), p. 77.

All of Augustine's major discussions of semiotics were known to the Anglo-Saxons but there was little indigenous development of them: *De magistro* is preserved in London, BL, Royal 8 C. iii (St Augustine's, Canterbury, s. x^{ex}) and both *De trinitate* and *De doctrina Christiana* were known to Bede and Ælfric (see their respective entries in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*, <<http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk>>).

- 52 '... the import of words – to state the most that can be said for them – consists in this: they serve merely to suggest that we look for realities. These they do not exhibit to us for our knowledge' (text, *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Contra academicos; De beata vita; De ordine; De magistro; De libero arbitrio*, ed. W.M. Green and K.-D. Daur, p. 194; translation, J.M. Colleran, *St Augustine. The Greatness of the Soul; The Teacher*, ACW 9 (Westminster, MD, 1950), p. 175).
- 53 This approach is directly contrary to Mary B. Campbell's when she asserts, in an otherwise useful discussion of the *Wonders of the East*, that '[a] visual image predicates nothing; only words can do that' (*The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400–1600* (Ithaca, NY, 1988), p. 74).

The Calendar

In many ways the *mise-en-page* of the Tiberius B. v calendar seems completely familiar. Its pages (fols. 3r–8v) appear to be conceived discretely with the components of facing pairs running in parallel. The zodiac roundels – which continue ‘a tradition that had been practised in England well over a hundred years earlier at the very least’⁵⁴ – are placed in the bottom right hand corner of the page whether that page forms the recto or verso of a folio. At the head of each month the figures placed in the strip illustrations appear to function in their own contexts with little reference to the rest of the page.⁵⁵ It is instructive however to compare this cycle with one from the early eleventh-century that accompanies the calendar of another Christ Church manuscript: London, BL, Cotton Julius A. vi (s. xi¹).

The first difference between these two calendars is that the smaller images of Julius A. vi are placed at the bottom of the page and surrounded by three-sided frames which omit a top horizontal line; the uprights are surmounted by acanthus bunches or architectural designs. Contrastingly, the frames in Tiberius B. v are closed and the illustrations sit at the top of the page.⁵⁶ Sometimes the Julius A. vi frames, and the figures enclosed by them, are distractingly close to the text. Within them however the figures seem to sit in better relation to each other, without the bunching to the extreme right or left which can be seen in Tiberius B. v (e.g. fols. 5r or 6r; Figs. 21b and 19b, respectively). It is true that in Tiberius B. v the ‘atmospheric depth and the landscape settings of the Utrecht Psalter tradition have disappeared’ but the charge of ‘insensitive copying’ ought to dropped in favour of adaptation.⁵⁷

Patrick McGurk notes that the labours for June, July and August in Tiberius correspond with those of August, June and July in Julius A. vi. He posits that this ‘can be accounted for most satisfactorily by assuming that T[iberius] skipped a

54 R. Gameson, ‘English Manuscript Art in the Eleventh Century: the Decorative Tradition’, *Antq* 71 (1991), 64–122, at 75.

55 It should be noted that the labours of the month were not commonly presented in strip form when accompanying calendars. Their usual mode of presentation was in roundels (which might mirror the zodiacal sign for the month), arches or some other type of architectural arcade. For example, London, BL, Lansdowne 381, fols. 1–7 (c. 1168 × 1189) where the labours are in arches; and Lansdowne 383, fols. 3–8v (s. xii^{2/4}) where they are in arcades.

56 The Julius A. vi calendar comprises fols. 3r–8v of that manuscript. Whole-page reproductions are printed in Brown, *Manuscripts*, pl. 115) [fol. 3r, colour] and M.W. Evans, *Medieval Drawings* (London, 1969), pl. 22 [fol. 3v, black and white]. The illustrations alone are reproduced in McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany* (pl. 9).

57 E. Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, 900–1066*, SMIBI 2 (London, 1976), p. 104.



FIGURE 19A London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 5v

folio in its model which contained June and July, and realized the mistake only after the substitution of August for June.⁵⁸ This is one possible explanation. He

⁵⁸ McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, pp. 41–42. On the relation of the Tiberius B. v and Julius A. vi images to the ‘Utrecht Psalter’ (Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 32) see J.C. Webster, *The Labors of the Months in Antique and Mediaeval Art*, Northwestern Univ. Stud. in the Humanities 4 (Evanston, IL, 1938), pp. 53–56.



FIGURE 19B London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 6r

also observes, however, that the 'eccentric and arbitrary allocation of scenes in T[iberius] and J[ulius] has long been commented upon' but that '[i]t would seem enough to suppose that the scenes were taken from some collective seasonal iconography with some expansion from other sources such as Psalters, and allocated without specific reference to past or present agricultural practice'.⁵⁹ If the

59 McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, p. 43.



FIGURE 20A *London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 3v*

relation of image and month was thus fluid, is it not possible that the arrangement in Tiberius B. v is the result of some other factor, especially considering the importance attached to images in the *Wonders*?

The rearrangement noted by McGurk creates a curious symmetry between fols. 5v and 6r, i.e. June and July, the two central months of the year (Figs. 19a & 19b). The two carts are placed back to back with their arms touching the ground, creating a gentle inverted V-shape across the page. Both carts are drawn on

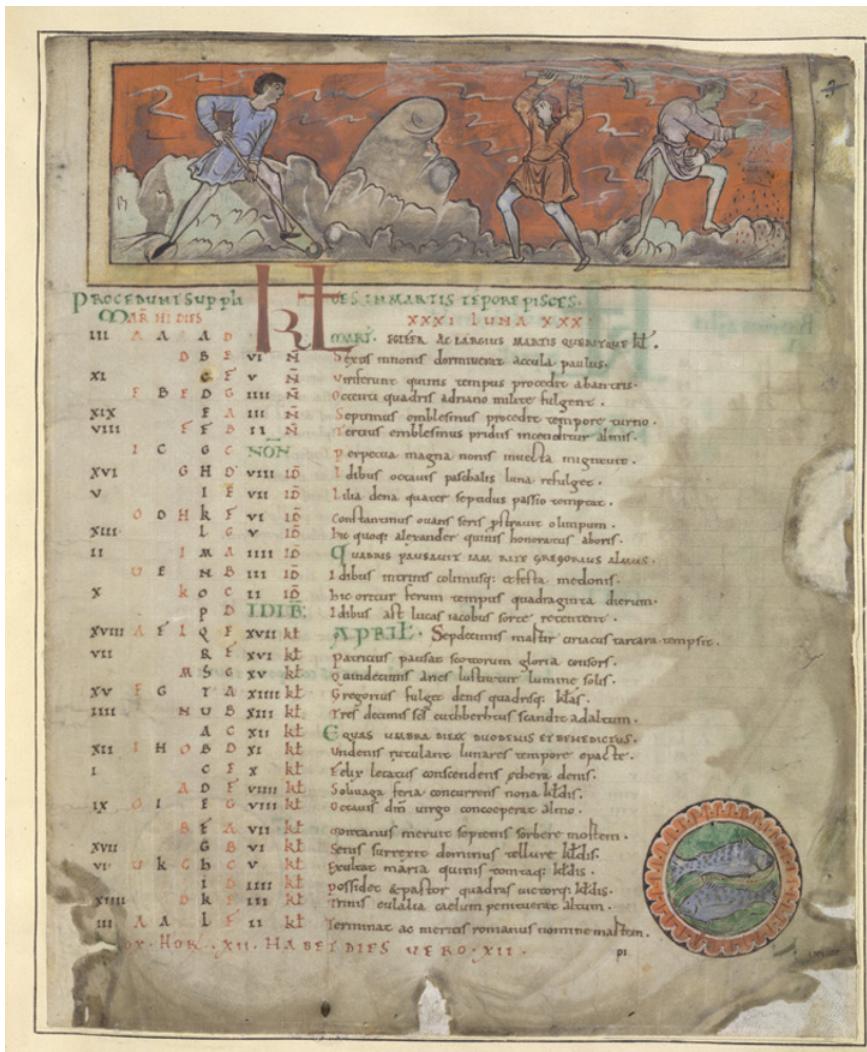


FIGURE 20B London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 4r

raised ground which slopes away, putting them on the same horizontal. The cart-arms point to the bottom mid-point of each illustration – marked by the only green tunic on fol. 5v and the tree on fol. 6r – before the eye is drawn up a second diagonal to the upper outside corners of the frame. On fol. 5v this line is made by the crouched bodies of the reapers; on fol. 6r, by the blue axe-heads of the foresters carrying through to the blue branches of the tree furthest to the right. On the left hand page diagonal lines are emphasized by the pitch-fork and the arms of the second and third figures from the right. The same

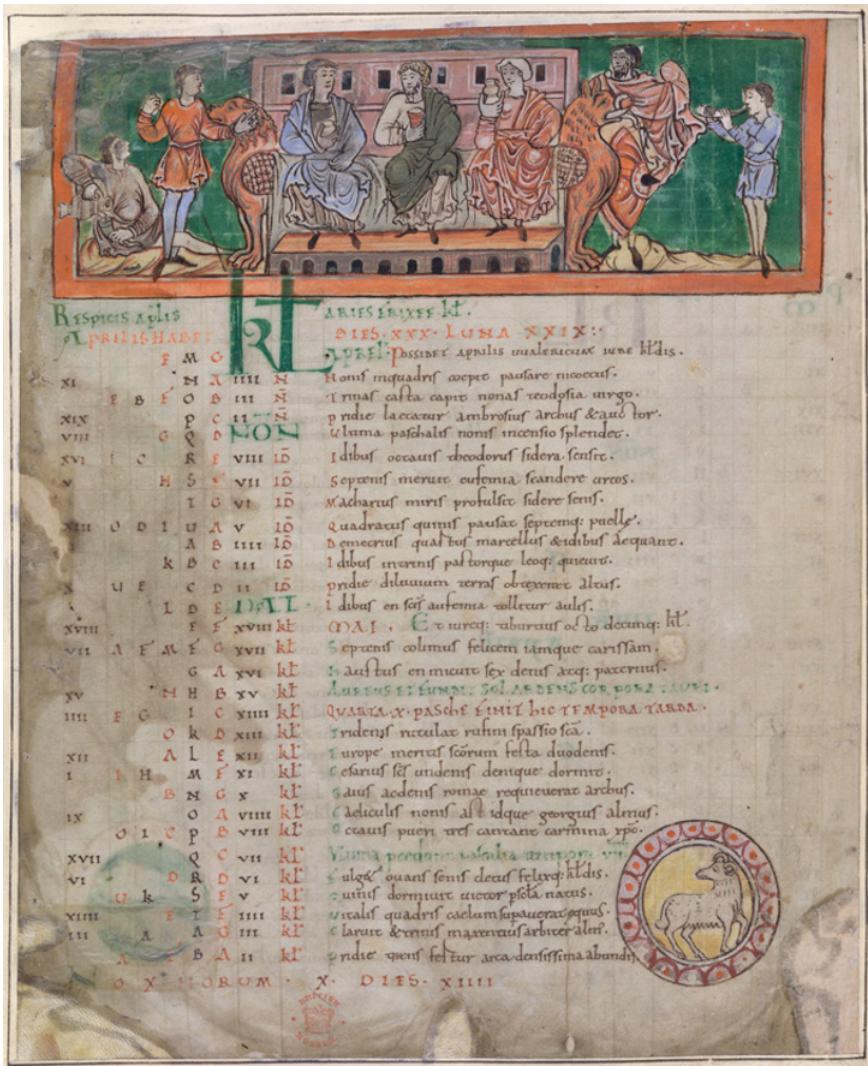


FIGURE 21A London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 4v

occurs on the right following a line made by the mattock and folds in the clothing of the blue-tunic'd man.

There are additional parallels on the vertical axis. The men in second and third positions from the right on fol. 5v are mirrored both in relation to the frame and in the colour of their clothing by those in first and second position on fol. 6r. Similarly the two animals at the far right face inwards as does the pointing figure at the far left. Both return the viewer's eye back to the centre of the image for the process to begin again.



FIGURE 21B London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 5r

Further evidence for adaptation can be seen in the designs for February and March across facing pages (fols. 3v and 4r; Figs. 20a & 20b).⁶⁰ The illustration for March has one fewer figure in Tiberius B. v than its equivalent in Julius A. vi. Moreover their arrangement in the frame has been changed so the Tiberius figures mirror each other in a way the earlier drawings cannot because of the

60 Webster, *Labors of the Months*, p. 55.

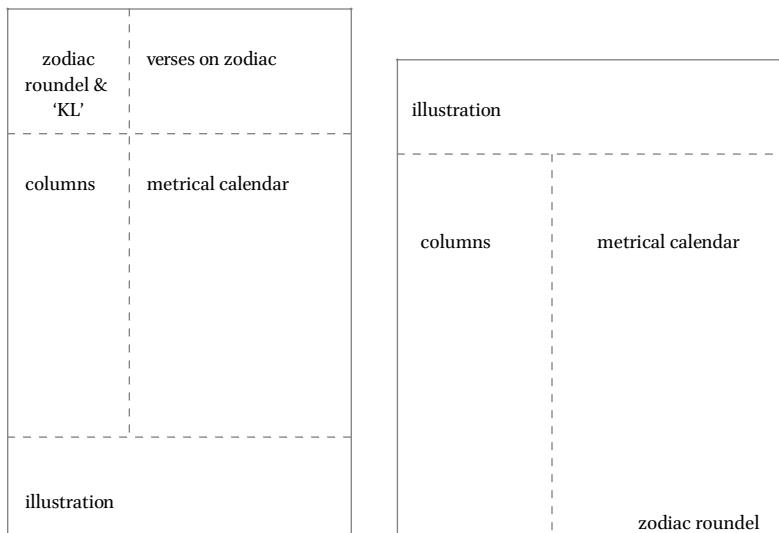


FIGURE 22 Schematised layouts of the Cotton Julius A. vi (left) and Cotton Tiberius B. v (right) calendars (not to scale)

asymmetry of their subjects. The addition of a ‘dark, menacing sky’ complements the trees which threaten to overwhelm the figures in February.⁶¹ Both scenes seem to emphasize the fragility of human attempts to control nature.

A final example from the calendar may be found on fol. 4v and 5r. Again the Tiberius B. v artist has changed the scene, in both cases by addition rather than subtraction. April adds a man blowing a horn at the right of the composition; in May, a second shepherd holds a sheep and the head of a third figure is added to the seated group to the right. The structural similarities are obscured by the use of a heavy green background paint on fol. 4v but both months divide the frame into three corresponding sections (Figs. 21a & 21b). By bunching the figures at the outside edges of the page this design retains the stable centre of the image – the seated figures in April and the hill of sheep in May – but creates extra space at the inner margins which acts as a fulcrum to balance the scenes across the facing pages. This attempt is not perhaps as successful as the effects created in June and July, or February and March, but the structure is apparent.

It seems, then, that three of the five sets of facing pages have been designed to function across open pages. As in the *Wonders*, the effect is to highlight the visual over the textual. In the calendar, however, the function is different:

⁶¹ McGurk et al., *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, p. 40.

considered across the open pages, they form a banner which embodies the compass, the embrace, of the Christian year. The absence of religious imagery at the top of the page only emphasizes the Christian character of the calendar below: the year and its activities being sanctified by the cycle of feasts and fasts, there is no need to depict them religiously. Even in those folios where the *mise-en-page* does not cohere across an opening, the weight of the frames and their position at the top of the page alone prefers image over text to the same end.

The calendar in Julius A. vi is very different. It forms part of sixteen folios (fol. 2–17) of material – primarily computistical charts and short texts – prefatory to a set of glossed monastic canticles. The volume is smaller than Tiberius B. v, measuring approximately 130 × 193 mm.⁶² Several differences can be seen in the design of its *mise-en-page* (schematized in Fig. 22).

I have already noted the placement of the Julius illustrations at the bottom of the page. Secondly, the zodiac roundels are at the top, slightly left of centre above the ‘KL’ monogram and clearly linked to five lines of verse not included in Tiberius B. v; and, lastly, the narrower page and larger number of left-hand columns (ten in Julius A. vi, six in Tiberius B. v) mean that virtually all the page is filled. Two related things are noticeable immediately: i) these illustrations, unlike those in Tiberius B. v, are secondary to the text; and ii) the calendar stands in a more complete relationship to the computistical charts than Tiberius B. v.

The eye is guided through the pages of the Julius calendar by the deployment of colour. The columns are written variously in brown ink, dark and light red, orange, gold, green, turquoise and purple; in each month the words *nonas*, *idus* and the ‘KL’ monogram are written in gold. Except in the months of April (fol. 4v) and May (fol. 5r) – where nones and ides are written in green and kalends in red – nones, ides and kalends are written in the same ink. The general effect is of pleasing chains of colour on the left which balance, albeit asymmetrically, the compact verse text on the right.

In contrast, the illustrations are pen and ink with only the faintest additional colour in places. Red is used to mark the seeds thrown by the sowers in January (fol. 3r) and March (fol. 4r) and to highlight the eyes of the ornamental

⁶² Julius A. vi suffered relatively little in the Ashburnham House fire compared to some Cotton manuscripts; the most noticeable damage is in the top right corners of fol. 2–6 (fol. 3–6 have been repaired with silk in these areas). The manuscript was rebound early in 1968 with each page attached to a parchment strip, perhaps at this stage or earlier, before the quires were mounted on paper guards. There is a binder’s stamp on the inside back cover which reads ‘B.M. 1968’ and a note in pencil on the rear pastedown: ‘Examined after re-binding J.A.M. 12.2.68’.

beasts in April (fol. 4v); there are green plants in the pastoral scene of May (fol. 5r); and the fire in November (fol. 8r) has red sparks. Very faint red marks represent chaff in the threshing scene of December (fol. 8v). The acanthus bunches or architectural motifs are touched with red in each month. There is nothing in the disposition of the colour to link the image to the text and no attempt has been made to construct the *mise-en-page* over facing pages.

As might be deduced from the greater number of columns in the Julius calendar, there are more computistical possibilities in this table than in Tiberius B. v. Since the charts could not be understood without the relevant treatises, however, it is likely to have signified nothing more specific than the general Christian claim upon the year, in the same way that a calendar serves as a general liturgical frame. Richard Pfaff's comment on the metrical calendar may well be applied to the Julius A. vi *computus*: 'whatever the main purpose of a metrical calendar is thought to be – a mnemonic aid or a bit of virtuosic versification – it is not primarily liturgical: that is, it cannot be used as an aid in deciding what the entire month looks like liturgically'.⁶³

Even if the calendar lacks a practical liturgical function it still places the reader within the larger context of Christian devotion, situating him or her within the 532-year paschal cycle and orientating them towards the eschatological hope it offers. The calendar and the *computus* were never solely administrative tools: they formed the conceptual superstructure and the *habitus* which ordered the world and offered the prospect of prelapsarian return. As Bede put it: *Quia per huius mysteria solemnitatis primam nos stolam recepturos, primum supernae beatitudinis regnum, a quo in longinquam regionem discessimus, nos repetituros esse speramus* (*De temporum ratione*, LXIV).⁶⁴

The above discussion demonstrates that meaning is not confined solely to image or text but is informed by the disposition of these elements in the *mise-en-page*. Julius A. vi assumes the narratives and presuppositions of the Christian faith: its purpose, reflected in a *mise-en-page* which emphasizes the linearity and processes of text, is the outworking of the same in a Christian's life. Tiberius B. v assumes the same Christian narratives and presuppositions,

63 R.W. Pfaff, 'Why Do Medieval Psalters Have Calendars?', in his *Liturgical Calendars, Saints, and Services in Medieval England*, Variorum Collected Stud. 610 (Aldershot, 1998), [discontinuous pagination], article vi (p. 6).

64 'Through the mystery of this feast [i.e. Easter] we hope that we shall recover our primal robe and return once more to that first realm of supernal joy from which we departed into a far-off land' (text, *Beda Venerabilis Opera. Pars 6, Opera didascalica. 2 [De temporum ratione liber]*, ed. Ch. W. Jones, CCSL 123B (Turnhout, 1977), p. 456; translation, F. Wallis, *Bede. The Reckoning of Time*, Translated Texts for Historians 29 (Liverpool, 1999), p. 151).

as we see below; unlike Julius A. vi, however, its function is communal. The preference given to images over text frames the codex as a volume for worldly contemplation. Contemplation – spiritual or worldly – is essentially a visual process, even when interiorized by *lectio divina*, and in Tiberius B. v it is facilitated by a *mise-en-page* that functions across facing pages given grandeur by the squarer proportion of its folios.

Tiberius B. v: The Semiotics of the ‘Computus’ Manuscript

We can see then that in its material form Tiberius B. v proves an example of David McKenzie’s bibliographical principle that ‘forms effect sense’.⁶⁵ To consider Tiberius B. v fully, however, discussion cannot be limited to the illustrated portions which form less than forty per cent of the manuscript. Not counting those which were originally left unwritten, there are fifty-nine pages containing illustrations (38% of the codex), seventy-four containing continuous text (48%), and twenty-two containing *rotae*, tables or maps (14%). The proportions might have been slightly different had the illustrated Hrabanus Maurus and the star map survived, but probably not considerably so.⁶⁶ As noted earlier, McGurk divides the manuscript into four types of text – geographical, scientific, historical and ecclesiastical – without the relationship between them, or their symbolic function, being immediately obvious.⁶⁷ I suggest that seen from the perspective of Canterbury after 1011 and the eventual Danish conquest, the manuscript as a whole may be read as an exercise in consolidation, a symbolic re-engagement with an idealized Anglo-Saxon past.

Christ Church was not unused to such symbolic acts involving manuscripts. It may be seen in the fraudulent ‘refoundation charter’ added to London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A. ii, a Gospel book given to the cathedral by King Æthelstan.⁶⁸ This charter purports to date from 1006 but internal contradictions show that it cannot have been composed then.⁶⁹ The copy appended to Æthelstan’s

65 D.F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, The Panizzi Lectures (London, 1986), p. 9.

66 See n. 2, above.

67 See n. 5, above.

68 These leaves were added by Robert Cotton to a pontifical (London, BL, Cotton Claudius A. iii) where they now constitute fol. 2–6. On Tiberius A. ii, see Keynes, ‘King Athelstan’s Books’, pp. 147–153.

69 S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred ‘The Unready’, 978–1016: a Study in Their Use as Historical Evidence*, CSMLT 13, 3rd ser. (Cambridge, 1980), p. 261 and the discussion in Brooks, *Early History*, pp. 257–259.

textus is in Eadwig's hand and was probably added in the second quarter of the eleventh century. A Gospel book with royal associations is likely to have been used during solemn masses in the cathedral, where its place on the high altar would sacralize it and imply divine sanction for its contents. Similarly, King Cnut's visit to Christ Church, some time between 1016 and 1019, was also recorded by Eadwig in another Gospel book, London, BL, Royal 1 D. ix. It records a ceremony during which Cnut laid the cathedral's existing charters *uppen Christes agen weofod on þæs arceb gewitnysse* to reconfirm the freedoms previously granted to it.⁷⁰ Perhaps it is not surprising that the record of such events might be preserved in what was 'presumably the principle text of the Gospels' of the time.⁷¹

A notable characteristic of Christ Church in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries was the importance given to Roman orthodoxy. There are several elements of Tiberius B. v which reflect such an agenda. In the catalogue texts (fols. 19v–24r), the account of Archbishop Sigeric's pilgrimage to Rome to collect the pallium (fol. 23v–24r) sits comfortably alongside the reformed monastic agenda of which Christ Church had become a part.⁷² The list of popes (fols. 19v and 23v) and Roman emperors (fol. 20r) in the same section also gives emphasis to this Roman orientation. The importance attached to Rome was not new; it can be seen in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* where, as Nicholas Brooks has argued convincingly, allegiance to Rome was an important element in the developing Anglo-Saxon ethnogenesis.⁷³ Such an orientation continued to be evident in the years around the production of

⁷⁰ F.E. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs* (Manchester, 1952), p. 182.

⁷¹ Backhouse *et al.*, *Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 69.

⁷² See V. Ortenberg, 'Archbishop Sigeric's Journey to Rome in 990', *ASE* 19 (1990), 197–246. A later erroneous tradition preserved in John of Worcester's chronicle credited Sigeric with the ejection of secular clerks from Christ Church and their replacement with monks (*s.a.* 990). See *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. R.R. Darlington and P. McGurk, OMT, 3 vols. [in progress] (Oxford, 1995—) II, 436–439. We cannot be sure when or how this tradition grew up but Sigeric's reputation was such that attributing this reforming act to him was deemed consistent with the memory of his character. However, it is most likely that Archbishop Ælfric ejected the secular clerks. See T. Symons, 'The Introduction of Monks at Christ Church, Canterbury', *JTS* 27 (1926), 409–411.

⁷³ N. Brooks, 'Canterbury, Rome and the Construction of English Identity', *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, ed. J.M.H. Smith (Leiden, 2000), pp. 221–247. Also N. Howe, 'Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England', *Jnl of Med. and Early Mod. Stud.* 34 (2004), 147–172 for a literary discussion of this theme. An extended discussion may be found in Y. Coz, *Rome en Angleterre: l'image de la Rome antique dans l'Angleterre anglo-saxonne, du viie siècle à 1066*, Bibliothèque d'histoire médiévale 5 (Paris, 2011).

Tiberius B. v. For example, in its liturgical preferences Christ Church ‘remained deliberately old-fashioned’, using the “Roman” psalter long after the monastic reform movement and contacts with Continental houses like Fleury had brought the “Gallican” psalter to West Saxon monasteries and to other houses of the Æthelwold connection.⁷⁴

However, this observation should not be pressed too far. Kathy Levazzo’s assertions that the *mappa mundi* (fol. 56v) puts Rome rather than Jerusalem at ‘the very centre of the western world’ and that the *Periegesis* is simply ‘a classical description of Rome’ are misleading. Tiberius B. v does more than combine ‘issues of time and space to stress the singular importance of the eternal city’.⁷⁵ For example, Tiberius B. v originally had three maps: the zonal map on fol. 29r, the *mappa mundi*, and the now-lost star map.⁷⁶ Each map had its accompanying texts. The zonal map related to the excerpts from Macrobius and Martianus Capella (fols. 51r–54v); the *mappa mundi* to the *Periegesis* (fols. 57r–73v) and the *Wonders* (fols. 78v–87v); and the star map to the *Aratea* (fols. 32v–49v). Since the ideological function of cartography has now been built in to its definition, a degree of congruence is to be expected between the ‘sweeping world view of time, eternity and the world from the Creation to the Last Judgement’ of computists and ‘the maps included in...medieval *computus* manuscripts’.⁷⁷ Moreover, among the catalogue texts there are also lists of the bishops of Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch (fols. 20v–21r). With the account of the bishops of Rome, these cover four out of five of the ancient Christian patriarchates, omitting Constantinople (although it is noted on the *mappa mundi* and highlighted with a drawing of a town). All this combines to give an evident sense of Christianity’s historical catholicity.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Brooks, *Early History*, p. 261.

⁷⁵ K. Levazzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and English Community, 1000–1534* (Ithaca, NY, 2006), p. 28.

⁷⁶ On the missing star map see n. 2, above.

⁷⁷ Consider the definition offered by J.B. Harley and D. Woodward in their editorial preface to the first volume of the *History of Cartography* (Chicago, IL, 1987), p. xvi: ‘Maps are graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes, or events in the human world’. The quotation is E. Edson, ‘World Maps and Easter Tables: Medieval Maps in Context,’ *Imago Mundi* 48 (1996), 25–42, at 39.

⁷⁸ The importance of Constantinople was not unknown in Anglo-Saxon England. As Bede notes in his account of the sixth council (*De temporum ratione* LXVI, s.a. 4639), three of Ecumenical Councils were held there: the second in 381, the fifth in 553 and the sixth in 680–681. The excerpts from Bede in Tiberius B. v are, of course, from *De temporibus* but *De temporum ratione* and its chronicle were included in some English *computus* manuscripts (e.g. Royal 12 D. iv where the entry s.a. 4639 can be found on fol. 120v).

The catalogue texts, ecclesiastical succession lists and royal genealogies, objectify the past to make the present comprehensible. The genealogies – as distinct from the lists – are essentially ideological acts.⁷⁹ Pierre Bourdieu described genealogy as a ‘theoretical census of the universe of theoretical relationships within which individuals or groups define the real space of (in both senses) practical relationships in terms of their *conjunctural* interests’.⁸⁰ As such, we may concur with Dumville that ‘to discover the nature of his [i.e. the genealogist’s] ideology is to acquire both useful historical evidence and a vital weapon in the historical criticism of pedigrees and king-lists’.⁸¹ We may see this clearly in the royal genealogy of Wessex (fol. 23r) in which the line is carried back to Adam via Scef, the apocryphal fourth son of Noah. This rhetorical move was necessary, as Thomas D. Hill observes, ‘to integrate the traditional Germanic genealogies into the larger perspective which biblical history suggested’.⁸² On the other hand, the ‘Anglian’ genealogies do not attempt such an integration. They trace the kings of Northumbria (Deira and Bernicia), Mercia, Lindsey, East Anglia, Wessex and Kent to Woden and Frealaf without any overt integration with the Christian worldview (although, as Richard North suggests, they may preserve some residual Christianization).⁸³ In two other manuscripts containing the Anglian lists, the list for Lindsey is regressed beyond Woden to Geat via Finn.⁸⁴ Here we may see Woden being ‘demoted’, to borrow Craig Davis’s word: ‘The fact that Finn, who seems never to have been perceived as anything more than a human king in Frisia, could be made the

79 That these categories are not distinguished severely limits J. Stodnick’s discussion of Tiberius B. v in “Old Names of Kings or Shadows”: Reading Documentary Lists’, *Conversion and Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. C.E. Karkov and N. Howe, Med. and Renaissance Texts and Stud. 318 (Tempe, AZ, 2006), pp. 109–131.

80 P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge Stud. in Social Anthropology 16 (Cambridge, 1977), p. 19; italics in original.

81 D.N. Dumville, ‘Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists’, *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds, 1977), pp. 72–104 (at 72).

82 T.D. Hill, ‘The Myth of the Ark-Born Son of Noe and the West Saxon Royal Genealogical Tables’, *Harvard Theol. Rev.* 80 (1987), 379–383, at 381. The variorum text of the Wessex genealogy is printed in D.N. Dumville, ‘The West Saxon Genealogical Regnal List: Manuscripts and Texts’, *Anglia* 104 (1986), 1–32. Dumville had earlier made the same point in ‘Kingship’, p. 95.

83 North suggests that Bede’s acceptance of Woden in the genealogies of the *Historia ecclesiastica* (I.xv) is based on a tacit parallelism between Woden and Jacob in the book of Genesis (*Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, CSASE 22 (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 116–117).

84 London, BL, Cotton Vespasian B. vi, fol. 109v and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 183, fol. 66v. The lists are printed in Dumville, ‘Anglian Collection’ pp. 35–37.

great-grandfather of Woden reveals the degree to which the former god has been historicized...':⁸⁵

By the time Tiberius B. v was compiled, the world these lists sought to evoke was already over two hundred years past. So were the historical alliances and ideological manoeuvres which Davis and Dumville see in them.⁸⁶ Moreover, in the context of Tiberius B. v they are 'very carelessly written' and, as with much in this portion of the manuscript, it is difficult to imagine their easy use.⁸⁷ We may infer a rhetorical rather than practical use, not only from the content but also from the presentation. Why had they not been brought further up to date? That is not a question easily answered. I suggest that for a community such as Christ Church in the years after 1011 these genealogies, articulating the common Saxon foundation of each kingdom, conveyed an incipient concept of Englishness around which they might cohere. This identity could be contrasted with the Vikings, whose damage was painfully apparent, or the Danes, into whose kingdom England had been assimilated after 1016. The original ideological function of the genealogy is overwritten in the new manuscript context so that it might perform another ideological task.

Similarly the *computus* material and Ælfric's translation of Bede refer back to a high point in Anglo-Saxon culture, iterating intellectual and cultural debates long since settled. Bede, the first ethnohistorian of the *gens Anglorum*, was influential far beyond his native Northumbria as even a cursory glance at Laistner's *Hand-list of Bede Manuscripts* shows.⁸⁸ However, the *computus* in Tiberius B. v appears unused. This can be seen from their incompleteness and the lack of subsequent corrections. The lunar table on fol. 13v provides a clear example: it lacks its explanatory texts and was incompletely understood by the scribe, as the misalignment of the numbers at the bottom indicates.⁸⁹ We may also observe the 'relative carelessness, disorder, and

85 C.R. Davis, 'Cultural Assimilation in the Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *ASE* 21 (1992), 23–36, at 24 and 29. Note also Davis's clarification of Hill's article on p.31.

86 Dumville, 'Kingship', pp. 77–81.

87 Dumville, 'Anglian Collection', p. 28.

88 M.L.W. Laistner, *A Hand-List of Bede Manuscripts* (Ithaca, NY, 1943). Corrections and additions to this list can be found in N.R. Ker's review in *M&E* 13 (1943), 36–40 and H. Silvestre, 'Le Hand-List de Laistner-King et les MSS Bruxellois de Bède', *Scriptorium* 6 (1952), 287–293. More generally, see C.W. Jones, 'Bede's Place in Medieval Schools', *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. G. Bonner (London, 1976), pp. 261–285.

89 An example of a lunar table as it should be can be found in Cambridge, Trinity College R. 15. 32, p. 31 (see n. 43, above).

incoherence' of the accompanying texts.⁹⁰ Since a general knowledge of *computus* was expected of a parish priest, it seems that its function in this manuscript – like the genealogies – was more rhetorical than practical.⁹¹ Certainly, Tiberius B. v would not have been the type of volume ordinarily available in the parish: for that, paradoxically, we must think of something similar in form and content to Titus D. xxvi + xxvii (despite its securely monastic origin) or Galba A. xiv (for which a monastic origin is a reasonable hypothesis).⁹² As Patrick McGurk notes, it seems that '[i]t was the [Tiberius B. v] compiler's deliberate intention to link this *computus*-calendar with the genealogies, with Ælfric's *De temporibus anni*, and with the other secular texts...'⁹³ In this sense the closest parallel to Tiberius B. v among the extant manuscripts is Trinity R. 15. 32 which, in its original and its present form, combines *computistica* with secular texts. Trinity R. 15. 32 is, however, much less ostentatious than Tiberius, smaller in size and with fewer illustrations. Its excerpt from Cicero's *Aratea* on p. 213, for example, is restricted to verses 'in the second and unillustrated part of the poem' which, in contrast to the display elements of Tiberius, confirm its status as a reading book.⁹⁴ Unlike Tiberius B. v, however, the charts in Trinity R. 15. 32 are finished so that they are usable. Yet to anyone consulting both manuscripts, the combination of astronomical and computistical texts seems remarkably familiar. Both envisage the Christian project of *computus* as part of the broad scheme of human understanding rather than simply a devotional practice; in both manuscripts it is the Christian elements which encompass the secular: a consequence of the universal reach of what Byrhtferth called the *deopen crafte*.⁹⁵

In sum, we can see that by marshalling these texts and presenting them materially in a high-grade manuscript of this sort, Christ Church was not simply demonstrating the extent of its economic surplus. It was providing a symbolic justification for what it sought to defend materially. As we shall see in the

⁹⁰ McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, p. 54.

⁹¹ Ælfric considered the *computus* an essential book for priests: *He sceal habban eac þa wæpna to þam gaslicum weorce, ær-þan-be he beo gehadod, þæt synd þa halgan bec: saltere 7 pistolboc, godspellboc 7 mæsseboc, sangboc 7 handboc, gerim 7 pastoralem, penitentiale 7 reedingboc*. See B. Fehr, *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in Altenenglischer und Lateinischer Fassung*, with a supplement to the introduction by P. Clemoes (Darmstadt, 1966), p. 13; quoted in McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, p. 51, n. 1.

⁹² On Titus D. xxvi + xxvii see B. Günzel, ed., *Ælfwine's Prayerbook* (London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii), HBS 108 (London, 1993).

⁹³ McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, p. 53.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁹⁵ P.S. Baker and M. Lapidge, ed., *Byrhtferth's Enchiridion*, EETS ss 15 (Oxford, 1995), p. 16.

following section, Tiberius B. v should be understood as a material object employed symbolically to justify real-world relations.

The 'Wonders of the East' as Semiotic

In a particularly suggestive phrase, Mary Campbell describes what she calls the 'Matter of the East' as 'a kind of perverse Scripture'.⁹⁶ I take her phrase to signify both the authority of the medieval discourse of the 'East' and, what follows as a corollary, its need for exegesis; it suggests both the diachronic and synchronic nature of the *Wonders* tradition. It also raises the issue of a reader's belief in the text, something she approaches directly:

The need for the world of *Wonders* was a conceptual need, and its data were important *as objects* of belief. No one has ever needed a griffin, only the idea of a griffin, or the idea of a world in which griffins are possible. The stark antirhetoric of *Wonders* frees its griffin from the inaccessible and merely pleasurable world of fable, poem, and romance: in a text without ornament the ornament must be substance.⁹⁷

Whether Campbell would put it in these terms or not, hers is an analysis of the *Wonders of the East* as praxis, i.e. an analysis not of a static, isolated text but of the text as one element within a larger field of social signifiers. It is an observation I wish to develop in concluding this chapter.

The medieval discourse of the 'East' of which the *Wonders* is a part cannot, clearly, be identified with the world it purports to describe. The two existed concurrently and affected each other dialectically. It is tempting (after the work of Edward Said) to think of the symbolic 'East' as a praxis derived from the intercourse between Western Europe and its 'other', whether that 'other' is construed as Asia or Africa.⁹⁸ Not only is that binary opposition historically false, as Suzanne Akbari has shown, it fails to acknowledge that any praxis is rooted in local and historical social relations.⁹⁹ It was the social world of Anglo-Saxon and post-Conquest England which gave rise to the praxis of this 'East', not the relations between one symbol (the 'East') and another (the 'West'). We

⁹⁶ Campbell, *Witness*, p. 53.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 85–86.

⁹⁸ E.W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978).

⁹⁹ S.C. Akbari, 'From Due East to True North: Orientalism and Orientation', *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. J.J. Cohen, *The New Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 19–34.

may then understand the ‘East’ as one element of the medieval *habitus* composed, in Bourdieu’s definition, of

systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them...¹⁰⁰

It is precisely because the vocabulary of the ‘East’ can be assimilated to new contexts yet still appear “regulated” and “regular” without in any way being the produce of obedience to rules’ that its appearance in the *Wonders* should be read as praxis.

The usual reading of the *Wonders* acknowledges its accretions over the successive versions and - perhaps from reluctance to consider the accretions and the forms of the manuscripts together - treats the text as a more or less stable whole in order to focus on the depiction of monstrosity or some other element. However, in order to demonstrate that form and content can be read together profitably, the five marvels added to the Tiberius *Wonders* will be considered in order:

- (i) the land of vineyards and the ivory couch;
- (ii) the mountain called Adamans/Aðamans and the griffin which lives there;
- (iii) the phoenix, which also lives on Adamans/Aðamans, and its nest of cinnamon;
- (iv) an unnamed fiery mountain and its black inhabitants;
- (v) the story of Jamnes and Mambres.

The reference to Jamnes and Mambres is the only explicitly Judeo-Christian reference in the text and has for obvious reasons attracted the most comment. The four non-narrative marvels are, as Andy Orchard notes, ‘well-attested in analogous compilations’ and appear unremarkable.¹⁰¹ They will however bear further investigation in this context.

Something further must be noted. When comparing the English and Continental manuscripts, Ann Knock hypothesized that the displaced text in

¹⁰⁰ Bourdieu, *Outline*, p. 72.

¹⁰¹ Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 20.

the English tradition is the result of misplaced manuscript leaves: 'The two blocks [of displaced text] are almost identical in length, supporting the hypothesis that the cause of the rearrangement was wrong folding of a pair of conjugate leaves or, in an unillustrated MS or one with very large leaves, reversal of a single leaf'.¹⁰² It is most likely true that the current arrangement of the *Wonders* results from miscopying at an earlier stage of transmission. While this distorts the original meaning of the text, it also creates new ones. It is these which we must discuss.

The Land of Vineyards and the Ivory Couch

As a result of this textual rearrangement, the vineyards and the ivory couch are no longer part of a description of Heliopolis with its contextualizing information. As Knock notes, an analogous account of Heliopolis is found in the *Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem* and in its Old English translation.¹⁰³ But if the connection between them was made - and given the proximity of the *Epistola Alexandri* to the *Wonders* in Vitellius A. xv it may well have been - it was not used to clarify these elements in the later transmission of *Wonders*.

Couches inlaid with ivory were a symbol of luxury to classical writers and signs of luxuriousness in the early Christian and medieval periods. As Pliny comments in his description of the elephant: *Hoc solum ebur est...quamquam nuper ossa etiam in laminas secari coepere paenuria, etenim rara amplitudo iam dentium praeterquam ex India reperitur, cetera in nostro orbe cessere luxuriae* (*Historia naturalis*, VIII.iv.7).¹⁰⁴ Further references to ivory as a luxury good can be found in Horace's *Carmina* (I.xxi), *Sermones* (II.vi.103) and at other points in Pliny (*Historia naturalis*, VIII.xi.31; XII.ii.5; XXXVI.iv.18).¹⁰⁵ To this list may be added Macrobius's *Saturnalia* (III.xiii.11).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', p. 71. Using Orchard's numbering scheme (rather than Knock's less easily available one) the arrangement of the sections in the Continental manuscript tradition follows the series 1–16, 25–32, 17–23, 33–37.

¹⁰³ Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', pp. 835–837.

¹⁰⁴ 'The tusk alone is of ivory...albeit recently owing to our poverty even the bones have begun to be cut in to layers, inasmuch as an ample supply of tusks in now rarely obtained except from India, all the rest in our world having succumbed to luxury' (H. Rackham, *et al.*, *Pliny. Natural History*, Loeb Classical Library, 10 vols. (London and Cambridge, MA, 1938–1962) III, 6–7).

¹⁰⁵ Also *Caecus uel praedones* (a fragment of Plautus), Cato quoted by Festus in *De verborum significatu*, *Aeneid* (xi.333), Suetonius's life of Julius Caesar and Plautus's *Stichus*. These references from J.-P. Cèbe, ed., *Varron. Satires Ménippées*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 9, 13 vols. (Rome, 1972–1999) xi, 1790 and R. Astbury, untitled review of *Varron. Satires Ménippées* by J.-P. Cèbe, *The Classical Review*, 48 n.s. (1998), 498–499.

¹⁰⁶ J.A. Willis, ed., *Macrobius*, 2nd ed., BSGRT, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1994) II, p. 194.

Of these we have evidence that only Horace and Pliny were known in Anglo-Saxon England. Horace's *Carmina* were known to both Abbo of Fleury and his pupil, Byrhtferth; some of them were excerpted in the 'Cambridge Songs' manuscript.¹⁰⁷ We have no evidence of a similar date for the *Sermones*, but they were known to Aldhelm earlier in the period.¹⁰⁸ In the Old English vernacular tradition we find references to ivory (other than the Alexander reference noted above) only in glosses to Psalm XLIV. 9–10 in the 'Stowe Psalter', the 'Salisbury Psalter', and three other Latin/Old English glossaries.¹⁰⁹

We must look then to the Biblical tradition as the place where the motif of ivory couches received its authority for Anglo-Saxon readers. I suggest that the couches in the *Wonders* would call Amos VI.4 to mind. Here the prophet condemns those *qui dormitis in lectis eburneis et lascivitis in stratis vestris: qui comeditis agnum de grege et vitulos de medio armenti*.¹¹⁰ This text received frequent comment during the medieval period. Searches in the Patrologia Latina and the Library of Latin Texts (CLCLT) show that nine authors cited it prior to the production of Tiberius B. v.¹¹¹ Four further instances can be found where reference is made to ivory couches but not to Amos VI.4.¹¹² Additionally, the Amos motif was still current enough in the late eleventh century for Osburn of Canterbury to refer to it in his *Vita S. Dunstani*.¹¹³ Of these texts, only Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* and *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Jerome's *Commentarii in prophetas minores*, the *Hexameron* and, of course, Bede were known in Anglo-Saxon England. It is possible that Sermon 48 of the *Sermones ad fratres in*

¹⁰⁷ Cambridge, UL, Gg. 5. 35 (s. xi^{med}).

¹⁰⁸ See the entries in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*.

¹⁰⁹ Respectively, London, BL, Stowe 2 (s. xi^{med}); Salisbury, Cathedral Library, 150 (c. 975); London, BL, Cotton Cleopatra A. iii (s. x^{med}); Cotton Tiberius C. ii (s. viii); Harley 3376 (s. x/xi).

¹¹⁰ 'You that sleep upon beds of ivory, and are wanton on your couches: that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the herd' (Douay-Rheims translation).

¹¹¹ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, iv.xv; Rufino of Aquileia, *Commentarius in Amos prophetam*, II.vi; Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, IV.vii; *De scriptura sacra speculum*, XIII; *Super epistolulas catholicas expositio*, III; Jerome, *Commentarii in prophetas minores (In Amos)*, III.vi; Julian of Eclanum, *Tractatus prophetarum Osee, Iohel et Amos (In Amos)*, II.vi; Leidradus of Lyon, *Epistolae, ep. 2*; Hrabanus Maurus, *Commentariorum in librum sapientiae libri tres*, I.iv; *De universo*, XXII.xi; Haymo of Halberstadt, *Enarratio in duodecim prophetas minores (In Amos)*, VI; Odo of Cluny, *Collationum libri tres*, III.

¹¹² Ambrose, *Hexameron*, VI.viii.52; Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (Ps. XXXIII), II.xiv; Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermones ad fratres in eremo commorantes, serm. 48*; Bede, *In epistulas septem catholicas*, I.iii.

¹¹³ W. Stubbs, ed., *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, RS 63 (London, 1874), p. 78.

eremo commorantes may also have been known since Sermon 49 was quoted in a vernacular Rogationtide homily.¹¹⁴

We can see that despite the disruption caused in separating these elements from their original context, an alternative set of cultural references existed which could provide a Christian gloss to the ivory couch of the *Wonders*.

The Mountain of Adamant and the Griffin

The phoenix and the griffin (Fig. 23) live on a mountain called, and presumably consisting of, adamant (OE *adamans*): *genus lapidis ferro durior* according to the 'Corpus Glossary'.¹¹⁵ Unlike other parts of lapidary lore, the supposed qualities of adamant were likely to be common knowledge. The trope is originally Pliny's in the *Historia naturalis* (xxxvii.xv.59). According to him, this hard stone cannot be broken even by iron but it may be softened by soaking in the blood of a he-goat, a most loathsome (*foedissimus*) animal but one whose lustfulness provides the necessary heat.¹¹⁶ Solinus, copying the *Historia naturalis*, repeats this information in the *Collecteana* (lII.lvi). In a Christian context Jerome, Augustine, Gregory the Great and Isidore also describe it.¹¹⁷ The four Christian writers mention that the stone may be softened by goat's blood. Augustine considers this marvelous but does not allegorize it; however, Gregory and Jerome draw significance from it, reading spiritual lessons in different ways: a pastoral observation for the pope and his Old English translator, a theological observation about the nature of Christ for the monk.

Alfred's translation provides the first instance of the word in Old English. He stays relatively close to Gregory's original sense. However when discussing the stone's use to craftsmen, Alfred exaggerates (or misunderstands) a part of the tradition found in Pliny, Augustine and Isidore. Alfred presents the stone as more pliable than they do, but he also implies that adamant was worked by craftsmen rather than that shards of adamant were used to cut or engrave

¹¹⁴ See the entry C.B.3.2.31.001.01 in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*. The *Fontes* database considers the *Sermones ad fratres* a direct source; the editors of the OE homily are not so confident. See J. Bazire and J.E. Cross, ed., *Eleven Old English Rogationtide Homilies*, King's College London Med. Stud. 4, 2nd ed. (London, 1989), p. 115.

¹¹⁵ Item A 245 on fol. 5v. See B. Bischoff, M. Budney, G. Harlow, M.B. Parkes, and J.D. Pheifer, *The Épinal, Erfurt, Werden, and Corpus Glossaries*, EEMF 22 (Copenhagen, 1988).

¹¹⁶ *Historia naturalis*, xxxvii.xv.59–60 and viii.lxxvi.202 (cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, xii.i.14).

¹¹⁷ Jerome, *In prophetas minores*, iii.vii.7/9; Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, xxi.iv; Gregory, *Cura pastoralis*, iii.xiii; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, xvi.xiii.2–3. The reference to Jerome is noted by P. Kitson in 'Lapidary Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England: Part 1, the Background; the Old English Lapidary', *ASE* 7 (1978), 9–60, at 21.

other stones: *Cuius fragmenta sculptores pro gemmis insigniendis perforandise utuntur*, as Isidore puts it.

And eac se harda stan, se þe aðamans hatte, ðone mon mid nane isene ceorfan mæg, gif his mon hrinð mid buccan blod, he hnescað ongean ðæt liðe blod to ðæm swiðe ðæt hiene se cræftega wyrcean mæg to ðæm þe he wile (*The Pastoral Care*, xxxvii).¹¹⁸

Et duras adamans incisionem ferri minime recepit, sed leni hircorum sanguine mollescit (*Regula pastoralis*, III.xiii).¹¹⁹

For Alfred, the hard adamant softened by blood becomes a sign of the change possible for those hard of heart.

Peter Kitson suggests that Augustine may have been an influence upon Aldhelm's riddle, 'De adamante lapide', which repeats the effect of goat's blood without any overt Christian allegorizing.¹²⁰ However the Gregorian echo in the riddle is worth noting: *sed sanguine capri | virtus indomiti mollescit dura rigoris*.¹²¹ The verb *mollesco* is only found in Gregory's account. Augustine writes of the stone being defeated (*vinci*); Jerome describes it being dissolved (*dissoluitur*) and its strength being destroyed (*perdit*); and Isidore writes of it being shattered (*perfrangitur*).

Isidore is part of a circle which leads back to Jerome. His explanation of adamant is presented purely factually and, as with much of the rest of the *Etymologiae*, was widely repeated. We can see it, for example, as a gloss to 'De adamante lapide' in a Christ Church copy of the *Aenigmata* which is almost contemporary with Tiberius B. v.¹²² It became a staple of the bestiary and is, for

¹¹⁸ 'And also the hard rock called adamant, which no steel can cut, if sprinkled with the blood of a he-goat, on the contrary it softens very much with the liquid blood that the workman can make what he likes of it' (text and translation H. Sweet, ed., *King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, EETS os 45 and 50, 2 vols. (London, 1871) I, 270).

¹¹⁹ 'And hard adamant does not take the incisions of an iron tool at all, but softens by the mild blood of he-goats' (text, B. Judic, F. Rommel and C. Morel, *Grégoire le Grand. Règle Pastorale*, Sources Chrétiennes 381–382, 2 vols. (Paris, 1992) II, 340; my translation).

¹²⁰ Kitson, 'Lapidary 1', pp. 24–25.

¹²¹ 'But by the blood of a goat the vigorous strength of my untameable hardness softens' (text, *Tatuini opera omnia. Variae collectiones aerigmatum Merovingicae aetatis; Anonymus De dubiis nominibus*, ed. M. De Marco and Fr. Glorie, CCSL 133–133A, 2 vols. (Turnhout, 1968) I, 391; my translation).

¹²² London, BL, Royal 12 C. xxiii (s. x/xi). See N.P. Stork, *Through a Gloss Darkly: Aldhelm's Riddles in the British Library MS Royal 12 C. xxiii*, Stud. and Texts 98 (Toronto, 1990), [unpaginated] [fol. 85r/6–10].

example, integrated seamlessly into the lapidary portion of the ‘Aberdeen Bestiary’.¹²³ Isidore’s description is not his own, however. It belongs to Xenocrates, whom Jerome quoted.

Jerome (*Commentariorum in Amos prophetam*, III.vii.7/9), quoting Xenocrates: **Est autem paruuſ et indecoruſ, ferrugineuſ habens colorem, et splendorem crystalli...Dicitur quoque in electri similitudinem uenena deprehendere, et maleficis resistere artibus.**¹²⁴

Isidore (*Etymologiae*, XVI.xiii.2–3): **Adamans Indicus lapis parvus et indecorus, ferrugineum habens colorem et splendorem crystalli, numquam autem ultra magnitudinem nuclei Avellani repertus...Fertur quoque in electri similitudine venena deprehendere, metus vanos expellere, maleficis resistere artibus.**¹²⁵

Though the earliest surviving English manuscripts of *In prophetas minores* are post-Conquest, the text was certainly available earlier because Bede gave the Greek word for ‘peninsula’ from the Amos commentary.¹²⁶ Isidore’s unacknowledged use of Jerome – and thereby another strand of its Christian

¹²³ Aberdeen, UL, 24, fol. 95v; s. xii/xiii. A lapidary was added to the ‘Aberdeen Bestiary’ in the thirteenth century. The discussion of adamant is on fols. 94r–96r. For a list of bestiaries combined with lapidaries see W.B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: the Second-Family Bestiary* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 256.

¹²⁴ ‘But it is small and unsightly, having rustlike colour and the brilliance of crystal...It is even said, resembling amber, to recognize poison, and to resist evil arts’ (text, *S. Hieronymi presbyteri Opera. Pars I, Opera exeggetica. 6, Commentarii in prophetas minores*, ed. M. Adriaen, CCSL 76–76A, 2 vols. (Turnhout, 1969–1970) I, 319; my translation).

¹²⁵ ‘The diamond is a small unsightly stone from India, possessing a rust-like colour and the clarity of crystal. It is never found any larger than a hazelnut...Like amber, it is said to ward off poison, drive away vain fears, and resist malicious witchery’ (text, *Isidori Hispanensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri xx*, ed. W.M. Lindsay, SCBO, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1911), [unpaginated]; translation, S.A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach and Oliver Berghof, *The ‘Etymologies’ of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 325–326).

The idea that adamant is *paruuſ et indecoruſ* is not found in Pliny, Augustine or the Latin translation of Damigeron. Isidore’s description is repeated verbatim by Hrabanus Maurus in *De universo* (XVII.IX). For Damigeron see R. Halleux and J. Schamp, ed., *Les lapidaires grecs: Lapidaire orphique, Kérygmes lapidaire d’Orphée, Socrate et Denys, Lapidaire nautique, Damigérion-Évax* (Paris, 1985), pp. 238–9. For Hrabanus, see PL 111, col. 473.

¹²⁶ See the entry L.D.1.4.288.01 in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*. The surviving manuscripts are Cambridge, UL, Gg. 4. 28 (s. xi/xii); Cambridge, Trinity College B. 3. 5 (s. xi^{ex}); Oxford, Bodleian Library, e Mus. 26 (s. xi/xii). Durham, Cathedral Library, B. II. 9 (before 1096), the only other manuscript of this text which Gneuss lists, is Norman in origin.

interpretation – would have been discoverable with relative ease. Putting these elements together we can see that through Gregory, Alfred and, at one remove, Jerome, there were symbolic readings of adamant which put it firmly in a Christian context.

The griffin is not so easily interpreted and does not lend itself to Christian interpretation. Beryl Rowland observes that the griffin's association with gold (as described by Aelian and Pliny) led to its interpretation as an 'emblem of *scientia* or knowledge' and its 'alleged habit of building its nest of gold was sometimes construed as generosity'.¹²⁷ She also draws attention to a passage in the *Etymologiae* in which Isidore presents the characteristics of Christ symbolically in terms of animals: *Nam et Christus Agnus pro innocentia; et Ovis propter patientiam; et Aries propter principatum; et Haedus propter similitudinem carnis peccati; et Vitulus pro eo quod pro nobis est immolatus; et Leo pro regno et fortitudine; et Serpens pro morte et sapientia; idem et Vermis, quia resurrexit; Aquila, propter quod post resurrectionem ad astra remeavit* (*Etymologiae*, VII.ii.42–44).¹²⁸

She mistakenly says that this text is from the twelfth book of the *Etymologiae* – the book in which the griffin is described (xii.ii.17) – and opines that 'Dante may have been influenced by this motif when he made the griffin a symbol of Christ' in the *Purgatorio*.¹²⁹ Whether or not it influenced Dante, her reading of Isidore is strained. What is most significant about Isidore is that in Book XII he does not read the griffin symbolically at all. As Ingeborg Wegner noted: 'Die klassische Sage kannte das Fabeltier nicht als Symbol'.¹³⁰

The Phoenix and Its Nest of Cinnamon

Following Lactantius (c. 240-c. 320) and his poem *De ave phoenice*, the phoenix was read typologically as a Christ-figure.¹³¹ There is no textual indication that one is supposed to do so in the Tiberius B. v *Wonders*. The accompanying

¹²⁷ B. Rowland, *Birds with Human Souls* (Knoxville, TN, 1978), p. 71. The reference to Aelian is from *De natura animalium* (iv.xxvii) and to Pliny from the *Historia naturalis* (VII.ii.10 and X.lxx.136).

¹²⁸ 'Now Christ is the Lamb for his innocence, and the Sheep for his submissiveness, and the Ram for his leadership, and Goat for his likeness to sinful flesh, and the Calf because he was made a sacrificial victim for us, and Lion for his kingdom and strength, and Serpent for his death and his sapience, and again Worm because he rose again, Eagle because after his resurrection he returned to the stars' (text, Lindsay, *Etymologiae*, [n. pag.] VII.ii.42–44; translation, Barney *et al.*, 'Etymologies' of Isidore, p. 157).

¹²⁹ Rowland, *Birds*, p. 72.

¹³⁰ I. Wegner, *Studien zur Ikonographie des Greifen im Mittelalter* (Leipzig, 1928), p. 60.

¹³¹ J.S. Kantrowitz, 'The Anglo-Saxon Phoenix and Tradition', *Philol. Quarterly* 43 (1964), 1–13.



FIGURE 23 London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 86v

illustration on fol. 86v, however, may be compared usefully with the description of a phoenix in the Old English poem of the same name (Fig. 23).¹³²

The bird in the Tiberius B. v illustration has a green neck and throat (*grene | nioþoweward ond usfeaward*, l. 298b–299a), spotted tail feathers (a *finta* with *blacum splottum*, l. 295–297a) and a ring around the neck (*swylce sunnan*

132 G.P. Krapp and E.V.K. Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York, NY, 1936), pp. 94–113.

hring | beaga beorhtast l. 305b–306a). Its wings are blue and, rather than white toward their tips as in the poem (*hwit hindanweard*, l. 298a), are white along the edges. The artist has also emphasized the belly by colouring it the same purple as the head, which is *wurman geblonden* in the poem (l. 294b). There is also a red and white area on the wing which could well represent what the poet describes as *se scyld ufan* (l. 308b). These correspondences are sufficient to assert that the artist was operating within an iconographic tradition which implied the Christian typology visually, even if it is not explicit textually.

The Unnamed Fiery Mountain and Its Black Inhabitants

The black inhabitants of the burning mountain are not the Ethiopians, who were mentioned by name in the passage on fol. 86r. In the lore of the 'East', Ethiopians were blackened by the sun, a trope noted by Peter Kitson in Pliny's *Historia naturalis* (11.lxxx.189), Bede's *De temporum ratione* (xxxiv), and in the vernacular as Riddle vi in the 'Exeter Book'.¹³³ The inhabitants of this fiery mountain, however, are presumably blackened by the heat of the fires where they dwell and whose flames keep them apart from other humans. That there was some slippage between the Ethiopians and the inhabitants of the burning mountains may be seen in the analogous passage of the *Liber monstrorum* (1.xxx): *In quodam quoque deserto montes ignei leguntur, in quibus nascuntur homines toto corpore nigri sicut Aethipoes*.¹³⁴ In Tiberius B. v, however, there is no geographical location for this mountain, although its thematic link with the mountain of adamant is apparent; neither is there any indication of what causes it to be aflame.

How then may it have been read? It is not possible to be very specific but there are two possible clues. The Latin text uses the same common verb (*ardeo*) with which the Vulgate describes Yahweh's appearance at Sinai (e.g. Deuteronomy IV.11; V.23; IX.15); similarly the second angel of the Apocalypse throws a burning mountain, *mons magnus igne ardens*, into the sea (Revelation VIII.8). I do not suggest a direct link between these Biblical texts and the *Wonders*, especially given the location of the mountain beyond Heliopolis in the equivalent passage in the Continental manuscripts, but simply note that a fiery mountain was simultaneously a place of holiness and terror.¹³⁵ In

¹³³ P. Kitson, 'Lapidary Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England: Part II, Bede's *Explanatio Apocalypsis* and related works', *ASE* 12 (1983), 73–123, at p. 85, n. 89.

¹³⁴ 'Also in a certain desert fiery mountains are read about, in which people are born black in their whole body like Ethiopians' (text and translation, Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 274–275).

¹³⁵ For the relevant text see Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', pp. 512–515 and 863–870.



FIGURE 24 London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, fol. 87v

addition to this we may note with John Block Friedman, who presumably had Luke x.18 and Revelation xii.9 in mind, that 'the New Testament followed Isaiah XIII in the belief that topographical height was associated with pride and Satan'.¹³⁶

136 J.B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse, NY, 2000), p. 149.

Jamnes and Mambres

Unlike the previous accretions, this text is plainly dependent on the Judeo-Christian tradition which defined it as apocryphal. Since the traditions concerning Jamnes and Mambres in Anglo-Saxon England have been traced elsewhere, there is no need to repeat them here.¹³⁷ I suggest that the significance of this accretion is less in the text than in the full page image on fol. 87v (Fig. 24). For it is an image, rather than any further text or commentary, which closes the *Wonders*; and an image which links the *Wonders* to the remainder of Tiberius B. v.

Sarah Semple has suggested that fol. 87v depicts a vision of hell constructed ‘with motifs from popular beliefs and practice’.¹³⁸ Her arguments relate this image and the representations of hell in the ‘Harley Psalter’, a possible Christ Church manuscript, to contemporary burial practices for criminals.¹³⁹ There is an uncanny resemblance between the figure tied by the snake and bent back upon himself and, from the archaeological evidence, the position that some criminals were bound before execution in the grave.¹⁴⁰ Semple’s paper connects manuscript images – too often considered only in the abstract – with the social world which produced them. In the same vein, I posit that to end the *Wonders* with an image prioritises the specific and the material over the abstractions of text. We have already discussed this process in the *mise-en-page* of the *Wonders*: how, though, does this image lead the reader into the rest of the book?

It is significant that Mambres stands at the top of the image holding an open codex with its contents visible. He points to the (illegible) text within. Below him the spirit of Jamnes has assumed a monstrous form: green, red-eyed, and clawed, he appears to breathe fire. Standing on the top of a hill and gazing into the chasm of hell, Mambres’s necromancy conjures a blasphemous parallel to Dives and Lazarus (Luke XVI.19–31).

¹³⁷ On this tradition see F.M. Biggs and T.N. Hall, ‘Traditions Concerning Jamnes and Mambres in Anglo-Saxon England’, *ASE* 25 (1996), 69–89.

¹³⁸ S. Semple, ‘Illustrations of Damnation in Late Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts’, *ASE* 32 (2003), 231–245, at 243.

¹³⁹ London, BL, Harley 603 (s. xi^l). As William Noel notes, ‘There is no certainty that Harley was made at Christ Church, and it is not safe to assume that it was entirely the work of the members of the scriptorium in which it was made’ (*The Harley Psalter*, Cambridge Stud. in Palaeography and Codicology 4 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 3, 6).

¹⁴⁰ As Semple notes regarding the archaeological evidence: ‘Remarkably, ten examples are known where corpses were found bent forwards or backwards. This is thought to represent the burial of a victim killed by strangulation or by decapitation whilst kneeling in the grave’ (Semple, ‘Illustrations of Damnation’, p. 238).

The image pivots on a diagonal axis which runs from the bottom of Jamnes's spine in the lower left, up his outstretched arms, along the lines of Mambres's cloak (paralleled by the strap on his right leg) and through to the codex via his pointing finger. Despite this, the eye is drawn back to the left by the weight of the grey-green used to paint Jamnes's body, against which the inert red-orange of the rocks provides no counterbalance. In this motion our gaze becomes that of Mambres and we assume his stare with that fixity reserved only for horror. We are about to make use of a book and Jamnes warns us, as he does his brother, about the right use of knowledge.

There is something further in the way in which Mambres points. His finger indicates not only his book but points to the right, as if indicating somewhere outside the picture, beyond the next page. In the original arrangement of Tiberius there was one blank leaf following the *Wonders*. We know from the Lumley catalogue that the item which followed was *De laudibus sanctae crucis, 'cum pulchris variarum crucium formis'*.¹⁴¹ Whether the Hrabanus followed this blank page directly or not, we cannot now know; but it is unsurprising that such a poem, with its programmatic combination of text and image, should follow the *Wonders*. As the wrong use of knowledge is encouraged by the wrong sort book, so the right use of knowledge depends on the right sort of book. Tiberius B. v, with its contemplation of this world in the perspective of the next, is a book designed with the right use of knowledge in mind.

Conclusion

These five accretions to the *Wonders* create a new series of possible meanings in the context of Tiberius B. v. The vineyard and the ivory couch have become independent marvels, probably the result of a copying error. By the same error the others, except Jamnes and Mambres, were removed from their original context of the land beyond Heliopolis. These elements (excepting the griffin and, to a lesser degree, the fiery mountain) are open to Christian interpretation in a way the other marvels are not. That such Christian meanings may seep, deliberately or otherwise, into a tradition which had previously existed parallel to, and independently of, Christian discourse changes the function of the *Wonders*. That it does so without any major disruption to the grammar of the 'East' is due to the function of the 'East' as a 'structuring structure' (to paraphrase Bourdieu) within the Anglo-Saxon *habitus*. Ironically, the instability of manuscript transmission may have helped render the stable version of the

¹⁴¹ Jayne and Johnson, *Lumley Library*, p. 162.

'East' which we see in Tiberius B. v: an 'East' that functions to consolidate an English community against its Viking attackers, precisely because the *Wonders* are open to Christian interpretation.

This strategy is not visible solely in the *Wonders*. We have seen that Tiberius B. v can be understood as an object through which the physical world may have been contemplated. The heavy emphasis laid on the pictorial elements throughout the codex confirm this. Of course, it was not the world itself which a monk contemplated when looking at Tiberius B. v: it was his own cognition mediated through it. To this end, Tiberius presents an idealized but legitimizing version of Anglo-Saxon history in the form of genealogies, regnal lists and Bede, the closest thing the Anglo-Saxons could claim for an *auctoritas* of their own; it defined Anglo-Saxon Christianity in relation to Roman orthodoxy and reformed Benedictine monasticism; it asserted the teleology of the Christian faith through the *computus* and, in its particular version of the 'East', placed its audience within it. All of this Tiberius B. v reflects. In Canterbury during the second quarter of the eleventh century, after the attack of 1011, to make a book of this sort was both a sign of the community's labour to restore itself and a symbolic codification of the things it considered worth restoring.

The Wonders and the Schools

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614

Introduction

The last witness to the *Wonders of the East* is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614. Despite the obvious similarities between it and London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, the manuscript from which it descends (at least, partially), there are significant differences between them. In the twelfth century scholars began to explore the natural world through the application of 'strict, logical rationalism to the problem of natural causality', a tendency that made monstrosity less of a theological problem in the Augustinian sense.¹ Such exploration of the natural world was often expressed in scholastic *integumenta*, a mode of thought that relied upon fable and myth and was, as Peter Dronke put it, both a 'means of cognition and means of mystification'.² Although opaque to modern thought, *integumenta* and their interpretations are a long way from the theological perspective that informs Tiberius B. v. Thus there is in Bodley 614 neither Ælfric nor Bede, and for the scribe to have included Hrabanus's *De laudibus sanctae crucis* would have been incongruous and redundant. Instead, the world of Bodley 614 is 'the scholastically formed, and militarily dominant, western Christendom of the twelfth century' where the pagan threat in northern Europe, which so informs the earlier manuscript, has all but vanished.³

In order to read Bodley 614 in the context of the scholastic world and its *integumenta*, two questions need to be addressed. First, the question of Bodley's date. This requires some careful assessment since the manuscript presents different kinds of evidence - codicological, art-historical, palaeographical, and textual - that appear contradictory. Second, the place of Bodley's origin is considered, along with its relation to Tiberius B. v.

1 B. Stock, *Myth and Science in the Twelfth Century: a Study of Bernard Silvester* (Princeton, NJ, 1972), p. 9. See above, pp. 10–11.

2 P. Dronke, *Fabula: Explorations in the Uses of Myth in Medieval Platonism*, Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 9 (Leiden, 1974), p. 47. See especially the first chapter, 'Fabula: Critical Theories' (pp. 13–67).

3 R.W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1995–2001) I, 212.

I offer no discussion of the political and colonial uses to which the learned tradition of marvels was put in the years following Bodley 614 but any scholarly engagement with the tradition cannot fail to be aware of it. This is a deliberate strategy to avoid the error of reading the early examples of a tradition through its later developments. The political exploitation of marvels during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, so clearly visible in the writing of Gerald of Wales (1146?–1223?) and Gervase of Tilbury (d. after 1220), is simply not present in the text of Bodley 614.⁴ This is not, of course, to deny the *Wonders* an ideological function in Bodley 614, provided ideology is understood in its specific Marxian sense as that which ‘conceals the contradictory character of the hidden essential pattern’.⁵ However, that ideological function can only be understood if Bodley 614 and its *Wonders* are read in a way that is able, in Pauline Stafford’s apt phrase, to ‘unthink teleology’.⁶ For what we see in the Bodley *Wonders* is not the end-point of a trajectory which began with its inclusion in Vitellius A. xv: it is the key to understanding the learned tradition at a pivotal moment in its history.

The Problem of Dating Bodley 614

Bodley 614 has three main sections: 1) fols. 1–16, a calendar with space for illustrations on the page facing each month, and computistical texts and tables. Only the illustrations for January to March were completed but it is possible a cycle depicting labours of the months was intended. 2) fols. 17–35, a selection of astronomical texts and an illuminated constellation cycle taken from

4 For a summary of the tradition, see Chapter 2 in this volume. The literature on the subject is substantial and the best overview remains J.B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Syracuse, NY, 2000). On Gerald of Wales, see J.J. Cohen, ‘Hybrids, Monsters, Borderlands: the Bodies of Gerald of Wales’, *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, ed. J.J. Cohen, The New Middle Ages (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 85–104. For a discussion of Gerald’s marvels in a manuscript context see M.P. Brown, ‘Marvels of the West: Giraldus Cambrensis and the Role of the Author in the Development of Marginal Illustration’, *EMS* 10 (2002), 34–59 and A.S. Mittman, ‘The Other Close at Hand: Gerald of Wales and the “Marvels of the West”’, *The Monstrous Middle Ages*, ed. by B. Bildhauer and R. Mills (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 97–112. On Gervase of Tilbury, see T.B. Mueller, ‘The Marvellous in Gervase of Tilbury’s *Otia Imperialia*’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Oxford, 1990).

5 T. Bottomore, ed., *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1991), p. 249.

6 P. Stafford, ‘Writing the Biography of Eleventh-Century Queens’, *Writing Medieval Biography: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 99–109 (at 109).

Opusculum de ratione spere, an anonymous and compendious tract that appears to have been compiled in the first part of the eleventh century.⁷ Folio 35 is a singleton added to the quire containing material from William of Conches's *De philosophia mundi*; 3) fols. 36–51, an illuminated version of *Mirabilia*, the Latin text from which the *Wonders of the East* was translated.⁸

Various dates have been proposed for the manuscript. Saxl and Meier assign it to the 'Erste Hälfte des 12. Jahrh.'; C.M. Kauffmann refines this to c. 1120–40 on art-historical evidence. Paul Gibb and Ann Knock arrive at different dates when assessing the palaeography, Gibb asserting 'the early twelfth century' but Knock the 'last quarter of the twelfth century'. David Dumville, too, accepts 'the late twelfth century' as Bodley's date.⁹ With such disagreement, it is necessary to examine every element of the codex in turn that might have a bearing on its date.

Codicological Considerations

The current size of the parchment is c. 143 × 100 mm. The text block varies between 115–120 × 75 mm. but is generally closer to 115 mm. The six quires are arranged in gatherings as follows: 1⁸ 2 and 7 are half-sheets, 2⁸ 2 and 7 are half-sheets, 3⁸, 4¹⁰ + 1, 5–6⁸. Conjoined sheets are arranged hair-side out. The sheets for calendar and the computistical sections (fols. 1–16) were ruled individually. Sometimes the scribe ruled quires in hard-point (the third quire), sometimes

7 For a précis of the *Opusculum*, see L. Thorndike, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, 8 vols. (New York, NY, 1923–1958) I, 705–709. For dates, see D. Juste, *Les 'Alchandreama' primitives: Étude sur les plus anciens traités astrologiques latins d'origine arabe (Xe siècle)*, Brill's Stud. in Intellectual Hist. 152 (Leiden, 2007), p. 271. The astronomical portion (fols. 17–35) is reproduced in D. Blume, M. Haffner and W. Metzger, *Sternbilder des Mittelalters: Der gemalte Himmel zwischen Wissenschaft und Phantasie. Band 1, 800–1200*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 2012) II, 251–260.

8 For a detailed textual and codicological description of Bodley 614 see A.J. Ford, 'The *Wonders of the East* in its Contexts: a Critical Examination of London, British Library, Cotton MSS Vitellius A. xv and Tiberius B. v, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms Bodley 614' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Manchester, 2009), pp. 26–60.

9 F. Saxl and H. Meier, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters*, III. *Handschriften in englischen Bibliotheken*, 2 vols. (London, 1953) I, 313; C.M. Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts, 1066–1190*, SMIBI 3 (London, 1975), p. 77; P.A. Gibb, 'Wonders of the East: a Critical Edition and Commentary' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Duke Univ., 1977), p. 9; A. Knock, 'Wonders of the East: a Synoptic Edition of *The Letter of Pharasmenes* and the Old English and Old Picard Translations' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of London, 1982), p. 64; D.N. Dumville, 'Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish: a Preliminary Investigation', *Proc. of the R. Irish Acad.: Section C: Archaeol., Celtic Stud., Hist., Ling.*, Lit. 73 (1973), 298–338, at 331, n. 2.

with plummet (the fourth quire), and sometimes with both (the fifth quire). Occasionally, dry-point was gone over with plummet (e.g. fols. 37 + 42 and 38 + 41). The scribe writes above the top line throughout the manuscript except for the first sheet of the third quire, i.e. the first sheet of the first text quire (fols. 17 + 24). Apart from this bifolium, which was ruled with twenty-five lines, the remainder of the codex was ruled with twenty-six lines on which were written (for the most part) twenty-seven lines of text. Some of the prick marks have been lost to trimming but there is evidence of double pricking in the outer margins (e.g. fols. 27 + 30) to create a double bounding line. These were most likely made with an awl or other sharp point. However, the prick marks at the top of fols. 30–35 swoop markedly to the left and so suggest that a pricking wheel may have been used to make the guides for the horizontal lines.¹⁰

N.R. Ker observed that plummet was in more general use after 1170.¹¹ The Bodley scribe's use of plummet, dry-point and double bounding-lines at the outer margin do not suggest he was a committed modernist in preparing the page. Similarly, the scribe writes above the top line throughout the manuscript except for one sheet. Again on Ker's account, the change from 'above the top line' to 'below top line' occurred at the end of the twelfth century.¹² These considerations together suggest (*pace* Knock and Dumville) that a date in the last quarter of the twelfth century is unlikely.

Art-Historical Considerations

The art-historical evidence has been assessed concisely by C.M. Kauffman: 'On stylistic grounds this manuscript, with its simple treatment of the drapery, not yet developed into fully formed damp folds [i.e. drapery drawn so that it appears to cling to the figure], may be dated to c. 1120–40'.¹³ This 'simple treatment' is undeniable, particularly if the work of the Bodley artist in the *Opusculum* is compared to the treatment of similar material by the artist of Oxford, Bodleian

¹⁰ See, however, the questions raised and references noted by R.A. Rosenfeld, 'Pricking Wheels: their Characteristics, and Recorded Use', *Gazette du livre médiéval* 37 (2000), 18–25.

¹¹ N.R. Ker, *English Manuscripts in the Century after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 41–43. Cf. A. Derolez, *The Palaeography of Gothic Manuscript Books: from the Twelfth to the Early Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge Stud. in Palaeography and Codicology 9 (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 37–38. See the description of the page layout in Ford, 'Contexts', pp. 55–8.

¹² N.R. Ker, 'From "Above Top Line" to "Below Top Line": a Change in Scribal Practice', *Celtica* 5 (1960), 13–16.

¹³ Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts*, p. 77.

Library, Digby 83 (s. xii^{3/4}).¹⁴ Since damp folds began to be fashionable in the second quarter of the twelfth century, and other Byzantine influences can be seen in Canterbury manuscripts closer to 1100, a date earlier in the eleventh century suggests itself.

Palaeographical Considerations

The scribe of Bodley 614 writes a classic Pregothic script. However as Derolez notes, Pregothic ‘is hardly a script type in itself. It is in fact Carolingian script that displays to a greater or lesser extent one or more of the new features’.¹⁵ Derolez identifies six general features that can be seen in Pregothic and fourteen further developments in individual letter forms. The general features are: a) lateral compression of the letters (o becomes more oval-shaped, for example); b) fusion between letters, known as ‘biting’; c) ascenders and descenders are shortened; d) letter forms become more angular; e) a greater ‘weight’ in the letters caused by cutting a broader nib to the quill; and f) the feet of minims and ascenders curve to the right.¹⁶ The developments in individual letter forms are: 1) the shaft of a is upright; 2) the uncial form of d is introduced; 3) the tongue of e slants upwards; 4) long f and s are written on the baseline; 5) the lobe of g is closed; 6) the limb of h descends below the baseline; 7) strokes appear above i and a second letter in ii might be extended to become i-longa; 8) the uncial form of m appears in the final position; 9) the 2-shaped r complements the upright form; 10) round s complements the straight s; 11) the stem of t begins to prick through the horizontal stroke; 12) w is written as two v’s; 13) x is confined to the baseline; 14) y is dotted, although not always.¹⁷ In order to assess where Bodley 614 is on the ‘sliding scale’ of Pregothic book hands, it is necessary to examine in turn both the general and the specific characteristics of the script.

The Bodley scribe demonstrates all the general features, although not all with the same degree of consistency, and writes eleven of the fourteen specific letter forms in the Pregothic manner. Concerning the general characteristics, the following can be noted:

a) The **lateral compression** of letter forms is visible throughout the codex. However, the tell-tale o is formed fluidly and rounder shapes co-exist with

¹⁴ Cf. the depictions of Corona Borealis held in the left hand of a female figure (Bodley fol. 24^r; Digby 63 fol. 44^v). Images of both codices are available via the *Oxford Digital Library*, <<http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/>>.

¹⁵ Derolez, *Palaeography*, p. 57.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 57–58.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 60–65.

more oval ones (some of which are quite angular) and the scribe writes both with ease. Additionally, the shape of counter – i.e. the space inside the letter – contributes to the overall sense of compression on the page. Since minims are two to three times the nib width and **o** does not exceed minim height, the thickness of the nib in relation to the letter size creates an oval counter in a round letter.

b) There are instances of ‘biting’. Derolez notes that biting occurs ‘in many codices of the twelfth century in the compact shapes of **pp** and **bb**, in which the vertical stroke of the second letter coincides with part of the bow of the first. Similarly, two successive **l**s would be united by a single long serif at their top. Other fusions are extremely rare in this period’.¹⁸ The majority of double **ps** ‘bite’ in Bodley 614 but not every instance.¹⁹ There are no instances of biting **bs** (although that cannot be said to signify anything since there are no double **bs** in the main text); nor are there examples of **ll**. However the Bodley scribe regularly joined two **f**s with a single horizontal stroke to form the bar.²⁰

c) The length of ascenders and descenders is constrained in relation to the minim height throughout Bodley 614. Majuscules at the beginning of a new sentence reach the full height between lines but ascenders tend not to go over the three-quarter point between lines. Descenders usually extend to about a quarter to half the line below.

d) As Derolez notes, the **angularity** that is often taken as a defining quality of Pregothic ‘is in fact not easy to define’ being ‘usually apparent only in some parts of the curves. It is usually most visible at the top and at the bottom of **c**, **e**, **o**, in the limb of **h**, the headstroke of **r**, etc.’²¹ The Bodley scribe exhibits angularity clearly in **h** and **r**, tends towards it for the most part in **c** and **e**, and combines angular forms with rounder forms when writing **o**.

e) The relative **weight** of letters is determined by the ratio between the size of the nib at the size of the letter. As noted above, the Bodley scribe writes minims that are two to three times the nib width and this is the average x-height. The letters are solid even though they are written fluidly and, despite being heavier than Caroline forms, have not yet acquired the ‘set’ quality of Gothic script proper. The characteristic weight of the Bodley scribe’s letters can be seen when contrasted to letters written with a nib that has been recut,

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 57–58.

¹⁹ For example, biting **ps** can be found at fol. 22v/9 + 42v/6 (*appellatur*), fol. 23v/2 (*appelauimus*) and fol. 23v/22 + 26r/22 (abbreviation $\ddot{d}P\bar{t}$ for *propter*) but not at fol. 24r/8 (*oppressit*).

²⁰ For example, *affirmant* fol. 17r/11; *effusis* fol. 17r/14; *griffus* fol. 46r/9.

²¹ Ibid., p. 58.

or perhaps a new quill been used. With a trimmed nib the letters have a notably rounder aspect and a lighter, less pronounced chiaroscuro (cf. facing pages fols. 43v and 44r).

f) The **minims** are written consistently with feet that turn to the right. The foot may be flat or angled. To aid legibility, the first minim of **n** or **m** is commonly given a definite hairline foot – in the same fashion as the foot of **r** – to distinguish it from subsequent minims that end with a softer turn of the nib, as in the second stroke of **u**.

Concerning the specific characteristics, the following can be noted: 1) the shaft of **a** is upright; 2) both uncial and straight-backed forms of **d** are used interchangeably, sometimes within the same word (e.g. *[an]dromedam* fol. 33v/1); 3) the tongue of **e** slants upwards; 4) long **f** and **s** sit on the baseline; 5) the limb of **h** extends beneath the baseline; 6) strokes are written above double **i** (e.g. *hii* fol. 37v/10) and in two instances of the number twelve, the second **i** is written as **i-longa** (fols. 18v/16 and 19r/27); 7) uncial **m** is used in both initial and final positions; 8) the 2-shaped **r** derived from the *-orum* abbreviation is used alongside the upright form; 9) rounds **s** complements the straight **s**; 10) **w** is written as two **v**s (*Wlfranni* fol. 4v; *Swithuni* fol. 8v; *Wlturnus* (fol. 34v), although the sound is also represented with two **u**s (*Uuandregesil* fol. 8v); 11) **y** is usually dotted, although not in every instance. However there are three Pregothic habits that the Bodley scribe has not acquired: the loop of **g** is not closed; the **t** is flat-topped and the stem does not protrude through the horizontal bar; and **x** is not constrained to the base-line.

Eric Kwakkel has taken these criteria and used them to analyse photographs of manuscripts printed in the *Catalogues des manuscrits daté*, restricting his sample to manuscripts dated between 1075 and 1225 in repositories in England, France and the German-speaking countries.²² From his figures it can be seen that biting **bb** and **pp** first appear in the period 1139–1145. By 1165–1179, 70% of the sample exhibits biting with no instances of double **b** or **p** written separately. This dips to 59% between 1180–1194 before rising to 81% in the final period, 1210–1225. Across the whole period (1139–1225) where biting is present, the

²² E. Kwakkel, 'Biting, Kissing and the Treatment of Feet: the Transitional Script of the Long Twelfth Century', E. Kwakkel, R. McKitterick and R. Thompson, *Turning Over a New Leaf: Change and Development in the Medieval Book* (Leiden, 2012), 79–125. There are several methodological difficulties with Kwakkel's approach but the results are interesting in their own terms. One might well ask how representative the plates in the *Catalogues des manuscrits daté* are of their manuscripts. It would be very interesting to see if the figures remained similar if the whole manuscript were analysed and the numbers of scribes per codex was noted.

number of specimens that display a mix of biting and separately-written double letters is never more than 5%.²³

If Kwakkel's sample is in any way representative, it makes sense to consider dates after c. 1140. Considering the Pregothic characteristics of individual letter forms also, it may be observed that the Bodley scribe practises eleven out of the fourteen that Derolez lists. This might suggest a scribe writing well into the middle of the century, if not later.

Textual Considerations

A *terminus post quem* of c. 1125 can be derived from the excerpts from William of Conches's *De philosophia mundi* added by the scribe to the manuscript (fols. 17r, 34r, and 35r+v).²⁴ Unfortunately, nothing can be derived from either the calendar or the computistical material. Other textual considerations do not relate to Bodley's date but are germane to its origin; these are discussed below.

Summary

To date a manuscript by one criterion alone risks all the methodological dangers of relative dating. If the factors presented above are considered in combination, a date within the range 1125–1175 (s. xii^{med}) seems probable. To my mind, the number of Pregothic characteristics in the script suggest a date in the second half of this range. Since the codicology indicates a date before 1170, but perhaps one in which new techniques were being learned, this fifty year period might tentatively be refined to the two decades after 1150.²⁵ However, the question of the 'simple treatment' of the drapery remains. How is one to answer the apparent chronological mismatch between image and script? There are two possibilities: the first, if the scribe and artist of Bodley 614 is presumed to be the same person, is that our scribe/artist did not have the same aptitude in drawing as in writing; and second, if the scribe and artist are presumed to be

²³ Ibid., p. 107.

²⁴ In his forthcoming edition Paul Edward Dutton identifies two recensions of *De philosophia mundi*, a first c. 1125 and a second c. 1142. I am very grateful to Prof. Dutton for confirming that the excerpts from Bodley 614 are of the first recension (personal email correspondence, 24 November 2007).

²⁵ The date c. 1180 is printed in my 'Speaking Beyond the Light: Experience and *auctoritas* in the *Wonders of the East* and the *Liber monstrorum*', *The Anglo-Saxons: the World through their Eyes*, ed. G.R. Owen-Crocker and B.W. Schneider, BAR Brit. Ser. 595 (Oxford, 2014), pp. 129–37 (at 133, n. 37). This is an *erratum*; the date s. xii^{med} did not make it into print despite corrections to the proofs.

different people, is that they learned their skills at different times but worked in the same scriptorium.²⁶

The Origin and Sources of Bodley 614

The question of Bodley's origin remains open. In his facsimile, M.R. James reported Henry Bannister's view that the calendar suggests a London origin and Bannister's unpublished notes confirm this report.²⁷ Since then there has been much work on the relationship between Tiberius B. v and Bodley 614. In an American dissertation of the 1970s, Paul Gibb presented textual evidence to show that the scribe of Bodley 614 'copied his text of *Wonders* directly from Tiberius[']s] Latin or from an intervening copy which was itself directly descended from Tiberius': the two manuscripts were thus 'related vertically'.²⁸ Gibb's presentation of the 'most conclusive piece of evidence to this effect' deserves quoting in full:

the final III of the number DCXXIII [on fol. 79v of Tiberius B. v], copied by the Tiberius scribe but subsequently covered by the illustrator with heavy paint and made nearly invisible, does not appear in Bodley. Since all other copies of *Wonders* and its relatives contain the final III, Bodley's omission could only have originated in Tiberius. Fully supportive of this contention are several palaeographic features and a number of faulty conjectural emendations in B which suggest a dependency on TL [the Tiberius *Mirabilia* text]. For example, TL's accidental Insular s on the end of *nascentes* resembles an r [fol. 84r, col. 2, l. 6], and the letter has been written as r in B [fol. 44r/9]; TL's *aput* [fol. 80r, col. 2, l. 12], actually a corruption of an earlier *ducunt apud se*, has been cleverly but erroneously emended in B to *accipiunt*

²⁶ As may be seen from the initial 'P' in *Pistrix* (fol. 32^r/8-9), the order of production was first, the main text; second, rubrics and initials; and finally, the illustrations. This rules out the possibility that the scribe added 'modern' text to 'old-fashioned' pictures.

²⁷ James, *Marvels*, p. 13, n. 1. Now preserved as Oxford, Bodleian Library, Eng. liturg. e. 3, where on fol. 149r Bannister marks a *nota bene* besides St Aethelbert (20 May; xii kl. Jun) and notes London as a centre for his cult. Bannister's authority is also cited in the *Summary Catalogue*: 'The calendar points to a N. French basis, modified in England, perhaps at London. H. M. B.' (F. Madan, *et al.*, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, 7 vols. in 8 (Oxford, 1895–1953) II(i), 229). The calendar is discussed below, pp. 113–116.

²⁸ Gibb, 'Critical Edition', pp. 9 and 14 respectively.

[fol. 39r/7]. Other clever but unsupported improvements are found at least fifteen times in B.²⁹

It was, perhaps, because he dated the manuscript to the early twelfth century that he did not speculate where Bodley might have been copied from Tiberius (Christ Church, Canterbury or Winchester being the obvious possibilities). Five years after Gibb, Ann Knock made the same textual observation. She rejected the idea that Bodley 614 was 'directly copied' from Tiberius, however, because of the prick marks visible in Bodley's image of the coiling snakes (fol. 41r): Bodley is 'directly descended' from Tiberius but 'was copied directly from another MS with illustrations on the same scale'; at least one manuscript had 'intervened'.³⁰ It is not necessary to interpret the marks in this way, however. The fact that two images are different sizes does not mean that one cannot be the direct source for another. And rather than being evidence concerning Bodley's exemplar, the prick marks might just as well be used to hypothesize that a manuscript of the same scale was copied from Bodley 614.

Concerning Bodley's origin, one further possibility deserves to be considered. If a date in the third quarter of the twelfth century is accepted, the possibility arises that Bodley 614 was copied from Tiberius B. v after the latter's arrival at Battle Abbey before 1154–1155.³¹ To explore this, a palaeographical *comparandum* is offered tentatively; then the calendar is discussed to see if Bannister's observations can be developed. Lastly, the text of Bodley 614 is examined to see whether any evidence can be adduced concerning the scribe's sources. The results are presented under four headings: the additions from William of Conches's *De philosophia mundi*; material concerning *De miraculis beati Thomae apostoli*; a reference to a certain St Urri in the last portion of the *Wonders*; and evidence relating to *Opusculum de ratione spere*.

A Palaeographical Comparandum?

A thorough search of the Battle archive, both codices and administrative documents, has failed to produce a substantial example of handwriting that can be

²⁹ Ibid., p. 13; cf. Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', pp. 84–85. Gibb's findings were accepted by Andy Orchard in his influential monograph, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf'-Manuscript*, rev. ed. (Toronto, 2003), p. 22.

³⁰ Knock, 'Synoptic Edition', p. 90–91. See also Knock's summary in P. McGurk, D.N. Dumville, M.R. Godden and A. Knock, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library Cotton Tiberius B. v, Part 1, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Nero D. II, EEMF 21* (Copenhagen, 1983), pp. 92–94.

³¹ See Dumville's contribution to McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, pp. 104–106 (at 104).

demonstrated to be a further instance of the Bodley scribe. There are, however, two entries in the 'Battle Annals' that bear a striking resemblance to the hand of the Bodley scribe – annals written in Tiberius B. v while it was at Battle abbey but removed from that volume by Robert Cotton (1571–1631) and now preserved as London, BL, Cotton Nero D. ii, fols. 238–241 (Fig. 25).³² The annals in question are the entries for 1170 and 1171 (Fig. 26), in which the scribe records the coronation of Henry the Young King (14 June 1170), the death of Thomas Becket (29 December 1170) and the death of Walter de Lucy, abbot of Battle (21 June 1171).³³ The similarity is in both the general aspect (letter forms, duct, nib to minim ratio) and the degree of variation in instances of individual letters (compare, for example, *a* in initial and medial positions). Two entries in a series of annals is not, however, a sufficient sample to identify a scribe securely and the *comparandum* is offered tentatively.

The Calendar

As Bannister noted the Bodley calendar is replete with saints – English and French – culted throughout northern and central France. Bannister makes particular note of the following feasts (the localisations in brackets, giving sites where these cults were particularly prominent, are Bannister's):

- 19 January (xiv kl. Feb.): Launomarus, Abbot of Corbion near Chartres (Beauvais, Bourges, Chartres, Paris);
- 10 February (iv id. Feb.): Austreberthe, Abbess of Pavilly (Bourges, Chartres, Paris);
- 20 March (xiii kl. Apr.): Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindisfarne; and Wulfram, Bishop of Sens then monk at Fontenelle (Sens);
- 11 May (v id. Mai.): Majolus, Abbot of Cluny (Cluny);
- 24 May (ix kl. Iun.): Donatian and Rogatian, martyrs at Nantes (Cluny);
- 28 July (v kl. Aug.): Samson, Bishop of Dol, and Ursus of Auxerre (Sens);³⁴

32 I suggested in my PhD thesis that the hand of Bodley 614 could also be seen in an undated land grant preserved as San Marino, c.A, Huntington Library, HEH BA v.42/1503 and in various entries between 1170 and 1206 in the 'Battle Annals' (London, BL, Cotton Nero D. ii, fols. 238–41). On mature reflection, the methodological problems attending this claim are insuperable and the resemblance I perceive between Bodley 614 and BA v.42/1503 does not communicate. I withdraw the claim (and the inferences drawn from it) that the scribe who wrote the entries for 1170–1 in the 'Battle Annals' also wrote the entry for 1186.

33 The death of Thomas Becket is recorded for 1171 because the scribe begins his year on Christmas Day (25 December) not 1 January.

34 The only Ursus to be venerated in July is Ursus of Auxerre. His feast day is 30 July, not 28 July as noted in Bodley 614.

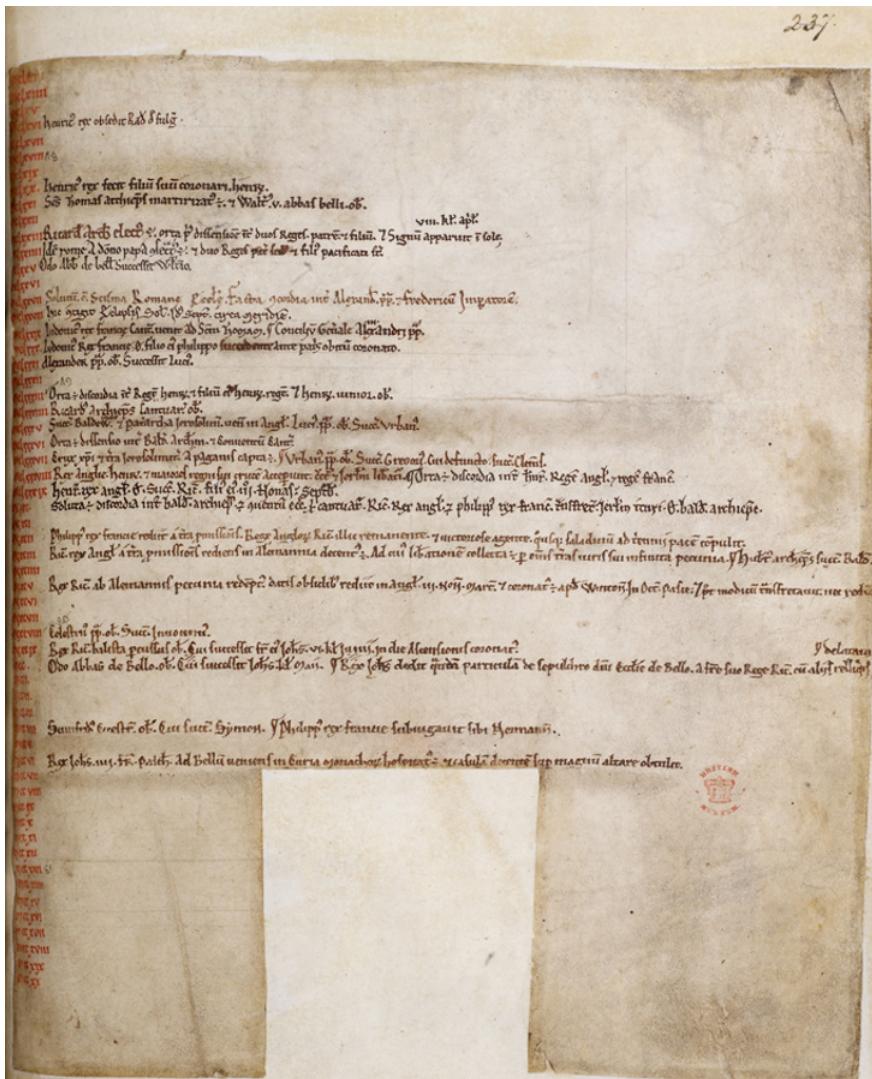


FIGURE 25 *London, BL, Cotton Nero D. ii, fol. 241r*

7 September (vii id. Sept.): Evortius, Bishop of Orleans (Meaux);
13 September (idus Sept.): Maurilius, Bishop of Angers, and Lidorius,
Bishop of Tours (Tours);
22 September (x kl. Oct.): Florentius of Poitou (Cluny).

To this list, we may add the following who also have French connections although they were commonly venerated in England:

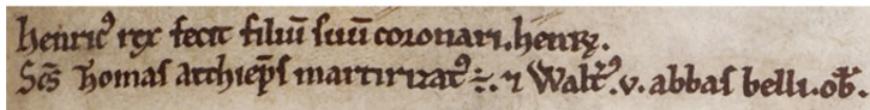
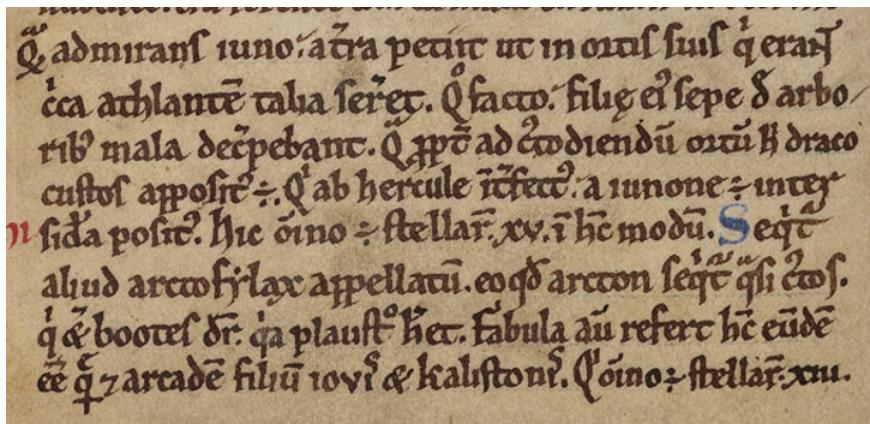


FIGURE 26 *Above: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 23v (detail)*
Below: London, BL, Cotton Nero D. ii, fol. 241r (detail; s.a. 1170-1)

- 15 January (xviii kl. Feb.): Maurus, reputed founder of the abbey at Glanfeuil
- 6 February (viii id. Feb.): Amandus, hermit at Bourges, then Bishop of Maestricht
- 22 July (xi kl. Aug.): Wandrille, abbot in Normandy
- 24 August (ix kl. Sept.): Ouen, Bishop of Rouen
- 1 September (kalendae Sept.): Giles, abbot in Provence

No calendar has been attributed to Battle Abbey. If one were to be found, it might reasonably be expected to mark one or more of the feasts of St Martin – the saint to whom Battle was dedicated – and, perhaps, given that his cult flourished there, St Nicholas' day. Problems present themselves immediately, however: the Abbey was dedicated variously dedicated to St Martin, St Martin and the Holy Trinity, or, in a threefold dedication, to St Martin, the Holy Trinity and the Virgin Mary.³⁵ The custom of keeping the first Sunday after Pentecost in honour of the Trinity was a matter of local practice not promulgated for the whole church until the pontificate of John XXII (1316–1334) which, as a moveable feast, would not be marked on a fixed calendar. There were also several feasts in honour of the Virgin Mary that might be observed. The Bodley calendar

35 A. Binns, *Dedications of Monastic Houses in England and Wales, 1066–1213*, Stud. in the Hist. of Med. Religion 1 (Woodbridge, 1989), p. 63.

records St Martin's translation (4 July; iv non. Iul) in a very faded gold and also the translation of St Nicholas (9 May; vii id. Mai).³⁶ The feast of the Immaculate Conception – 'an English trait, but not exclusively so' – is also marked (8 December; vi id. Dec.).³⁷

The evidence of the calendar, then, is inconclusive; Bodley could only be assigned to Battle Abbey if the palaeographical *comparandum* is accepted. James's conjecture that the 'rather colourless and even distribution of names' may have 'led Mr Bannister to suggest London as the place, where the evidently North French basis was modified' is as likely an explanation of the calendar's origin as any other.³⁸ A 'North French' emphasis would make sense in a product from Battle but with nothing particular to tie it to there, it would be unreasonable to infer anything further.

The Additions from William of Conches's 'De philosophia mundi'

It would appear that at some point after writing the main body of the manuscript, the scribe of Bodley 614 acquired a copy of William of Conches's 'provocative book' *De philosophia mundi*, from which the present manuscript was updated.³⁹ A glance at the list of surviving manuscripts of *De philosophia mundi* shows that it was extremely popular: twenty-four manuscripts survive from the twelfth century and it was read as far afield as Constantinople by 1165.⁴⁰

The result for Bodley 614 was twofold. The scribe added a singleton (fol. 35) at the end of the third quire to accommodate extracts from William on rainbows and shooting stars.⁴¹ He also added a gloss to fol. 17r, writing in a cursive hand, which gives the names and the characteristics of Phoebus's horses. This annotation is now badly mutilated as the result of trimming, but one reading is preserved clearly: 'Ericteus', the name of the first horse.⁴²

³⁶ For St Nicholas at Battle, see D.N. Dumville's contribution to McGurk *et al.*, *Eleventh-Century Miscellany*, pp. 104–106.

³⁷ James, *Marvels*, p. 13, n. 1. This feast was sanctioned with some debate at the Council of London in 1129 but had been included in English calendars since the 1060s. For examples in English calendars see R. Rushforth, *Saints in English Kalendars before AD 1100*, HBS 117 (London, 2008).

³⁸ James, *Marvels*, p. 13.

³⁹ P.E. Dutton, *The Mystery of the Missing Heresy Trial of William of Conches*, Etienne Gilson ser. 28 (Toronto, 2006), p. 8.

⁴⁰ See the 'Preliminary List of *Philosophia* Manuscripts' in *ibid.*, pp. 37–40.

⁴¹ From *De philosophia mundi* III.vii and III.xii respectively; PL 172, cols. 77 and 79; G. Maurach, ed., *Wilhelm von Conches. Philosophia*, with Heidemarie Telle, *Studia 16* (Pretoria, 1980), pp. 76 and 79–80.

⁴² *De philosophia mundi* II.xxviii; PL 172, col. 71; Maurach, *Philosophia*, pp. 63–64.

The twelfth century inherited several different traditions concerning the names of Phoebus's horses. Ovid provides one in the *Metamorphoses*; Hyginus names several in the *Fabulae*; and Fulgentius, who William of Conches followed, gave another in the *Mitologiarum*. As may be expected in the manuscript transmission of proper names, and in a story which was retold in many contexts, there are many variant spellings.⁴³

I have found that the spelling 'Ericteus' is used in several places: it is preserved in copies of Bernard of Utrecht's *Commentum in Theodolum* (bk III, in ll. 245–8); in the third Vatican *Mythography* (III.viii.6) where its only editor, Georg Bode, noted the spelling as a variant in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8508 (Bode's *siglum 'N'*); it is present, too, in copies of the *Glosae super Boetium* (bk II, in metrum 3) and the *Dragmaticon* (IV.xii.3), both by William of Conches; and it may also be found in Bernardus Silvestris's commentary on Martianus Capella, a text which was written partially in response to Conches's *Philosophia*.⁴⁴ Moreover, the reading 'Ericteus' is present in 'more than a third of the 80 or so mss' of *De philosophia mundi*, 'including many of the Paris and French mss'.⁴⁵ Not only is this spelling strongly represented in Continental texts and manuscripts, it may be associated particularly with the French copies of *De philosophia mundi*.

It is likely, then, that the copy of *De philosophia mundi* from which the scribe of Bodley 614 took the additional material was French. Moreover, in making this identification Bodley 614 manuscript becomes the earliest evidence for *De philosophia mundi* (as opposed to the later revision known as *Dragmaticon*) circulating in England. This is a significant advance on the hypothetical and circumstantial evidence for this text's circulation in England given that none

43 The names of Phoebus's horses can be found in the tradition of Boethius glossing represented in England by Cambridge, UL, Kk. 3. 21 (s. xi¹). Similarly the names are also found in the *Scholia Sangermanensis*, the *Glossary of Aynard of St Èvre*; Pseudo-Bede, *De mundi constitutione*; and Remigius of Auxerre's *Commentum in Martianum Capellam*. There are no doubt other examples which I have not traced. None of these examples record the spelling Ericteus in the *apparati critici* of their standard editions. See, Ford, 'Contexts', p. 110, n. 58.

44 See respectively, R.B.C. Huygens, *Bernard D'Utrecht. Commentum in Theodolum* (1076–1099), Biblioteca degli Studi Medievali 8 (Spoleto, 1977), p. 102; G.H. Bode, *Scriptores rerum mythicarum latini tres Romae nuper reperti*, 2 vols. in 1 (Cellis, 1834) I, 202 (text) and II, 139 (*apparatus criticus*); Guillelmi de Conchis *Glosae super Boetium*, ed. L. Nauta, CCCM 158 (Turnhout, 1999), p. 110; Guillelmi de Conchis *Dragmaticon philosophiae; Summa de philosophia in vulgari*, ed. I. Ronca, L. Badia and J. Pujol, CCCM 152 (Turnhout, 1997), p. 112; H.J. Westra, *The Commentary on Martianus Capella's 'De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii' attributed to Bernardus Silvestris*, Stud. and Texts 80 (Toronto, 1986), p. 192.

45 Information kindly supplied by Prof. Paul Edward Dutton (personal email correspondence, 1 December 2007).

of the extant twelfth-century manuscripts of *De philosophia mundi* is of English origin and that the earliest entries in English catalogues for this work are fourteenth century.⁴⁶ None of this, of course, is evidence for the origin of Bodley 614; there was much traffic between England and France in the Anglo-Norman world. But it does help us build a picture of the kind of place that produced it: somewhere connected to continental learning and open to new, current and controversial ideas.

De miraculis beati Thomae apostoli

The text on fol. 17r (inc. *Sol dum igne nature sit*) contains a sentence taken from *De miraculis beati Thomae apostoli*.⁴⁷ Traditions relating to Thomas were well-known in England but they appear to be based around the version of his life known as the *Passio S. Thomae* and texts such as the *Thomine Apocalypse* and the Hiberno-Latin *Liber de ortu et obitu patriarcharum* (XLIX). The *Passio* was well known in England. Versions of the Latin text survive in Hereford, Cathedral Library, P. 7. vi (s. xii²) and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 354 (s. xii/xiii). In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, it had been used by Aldhelm (in the prose *De virginitate*), Cynewulf (*Lives of the Apostles*), the Old English Martyrologist, and Ælfric, whose *Lives of the Saints* still circulated in the twelfth century.⁴⁸ Similarly, the *Apocalypse* left traces in several anonymous vernacular homilies one of which survives in a twelfth-century manuscript.⁴⁹ The *Miraculis*, from which the reading in Bodley 614 is taken, was a text widely distributed on the Continent – given the evidence of the thirty-three extant

46 The evidence for the transmission of *De philosophia mundi* is poor considering the number of surviving English copies of the *Dragmaticon* from the thirteenth century. The earliest manuscript was written at Ely (London, BL, Arundel 377; s. xii/xiii). Richard Sharpe's 'List of Identifications' (version of 28 October 2013) for the *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* lists *De philosophia mundi* in fourteenth-century catalogues from York [siglum FA8], Meaux [siglum Z14], Peterborough [siglum BP21], and at Merton and Oriel Colleges, Oxford [sigla UO48/49 and UO80, respectively]. The list and accompanying documents may be downloaded from the project homepage at <<http://www.history.ox.ac.uk/research/project/british-medieval-library-catalogues.html>>.

47 The sentence in question reads: *habens quadrigam equorum et currum bige habenis effusis. quasi cursu rapido per ethera agatur*. This text comes from *De miraculis beati Thomae apostoli* and preserves a slightly different reading from the *Passio sancti Thomae apostoli*. See K. Zelzer, ed., *Die alten lateinischen Thomasakten*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur 122 (Berlin, 1977), p. 37 (*passio Thomae*) and p. 62 (*miraculus Thomae*).

48 Cambridge, UL, Ii 1.-33 (s. xii²).

49 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 116 (s. xii¹).

witnesses listed by Zelzer – but not one apparently known in England.⁵⁰ The use of this text, then, further suggests the availability of Continental exemplars to the scribe of Bodley 614.

St Urri and the Folklore of Megalithic Monuments

The St Urri of the last portion of the *Wonders* (fol. 51r) is difficult to interpret and cannot be identified from any of the standard sources. The Bollandists make no mention of him in the indexes to the *Acta sanctorum*, nor is he to be found in the electronic version of the same. There is no St Urri in the *Bibliotheca sanctorum*, or in the collections of Butler or Baring-Gould. He does not even merit a mention in the *Dictionnaire thématique et géographique des saints imaginaires, facétieux et substitués*.⁵¹ Extensive searches in material relating to Celtic saints (particularly the hagiography of Cornwall and Brittany, where myths relating to megalithic monuments are common) have not produced anything which might be related, however remotely, to a saint called Urri.⁵² To the best of my knowledge there is no toponymic evidence in Cornwall or Brittany which would indicate the presence of a cult to a saint of this name.

It is of course possible that the cult of St Urri has not survived in the historical record. However, another tentative hypothesis may be offered. Concerning the folklore of these monuments, Paul-Yves Sébillot notes:

Une autre origine donnée à un certain nombre de menhirs est la pétrification d'êtres humains en punition d'un péché.

A Kerroch, près de Kerlouan [in Finisterre], les pierres des allées couvertes sont des jeunes filles ainsi transformées pour avoir continué de danser quand le saint sacrement passait. A Brasparts [also in Finisterre], un alignement d'une vingtaine de menhirs est le cortège d'une noce: *an eured ven*, 'la noce de pierre', qui ne cessa pas de danser au passage d'un prêtre portant le saint Viatique. Un double cromlech est appelé 'Les demoiselles de Lanjon' (canton de Redon). Ce sont des jeunes filles qui dansaient le dimanche au lieu d'aller à la messe.⁵³

⁵⁰ Zelzer, *Thomasakten*, pp. xlvi–xlviii.

⁵¹ J.E. Merceron, *Dictionnaire thématique et géographique des saints imaginaires, facétieux et substitués* (Paris, 2002).

⁵² On the folklore associated with megalithic standing stones see S.P. Menefee, 'The "Merry Maidens" and the "Noce de Pierre"', *Folklore* 85 (1974), 23–42.

⁵³ P.-Y. Sébillot, *Le folklore de la Bretagne*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1968) II, 87.

It is possible that Bodley 614 preserves more than just an amalgamation of several folk tales relating to standing stones. As Sébillot notes, the Breton term for a *noce de pierre* is *an eured ven* (literally, ‘the inert wedding’).⁵⁴ The present-day pronunciation of *eured*, <ø:rët>, is not far from <ʌri> or <ʌri:>, possible pronunciations of ‘Urri’. It cannot be proven but it is conceivable that the name ‘Urri’ is a Latinization of the word *eured*, the meaning garbled when an oral tale in an unfamiliar language was adapted for a literate context.⁵⁵

In addition to the folk tales associated with megalithic monuments, M.R. James noted the similarity between these tales and the miracle story known as the ‘Dancers of Colbeck’ related by William of Malmesbury in the *Gesta regum Anglorum* (II.174).⁵⁶ Versions of this story, known famously from the Middle English exemplum of Robert Mannyng (d. ?1338), circulated widely in the twelfth century and after. Edward Schröder edited three versions of the tale from Latin texts, the first from eight manuscripts, the second from three, and third from an addition to a homiliary.⁵⁷ The story was known in England, France and Germany. Apart from William of Malmesbury, it was known to Goscelin of St-Bertin,⁵⁸ to Orderic Vitalis (who himself copied the second version now preserved as Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 6503), and to the writers of the *Flores historiarum*, among others.⁵⁹ It is also worth noting that St Samson, noted in Bodley’s calendar on 28 July (v kl. Aug.) was also reputed to have condemned dancing around a menhir in Brittany.⁶⁰ If the above hypothesis concerning the derivation of St Urri is accepted, it allows this final accretion to the *Wonders* to be understood as a localizable manifestation of a larger European phenomenon. Its inclusion in Bodley 614 suggests a compiler familiar with Breton folk-lore and, possibly, an intended audience familiar with the same.

54 The adjective *ven* also has the meanings ‘vain’ and ‘lazy’.

55 R. Delaporte, *Brezhoneg...Buan Hag Aes: a Beginner’s Course in Breton* (Cork, 1977), p. 21. A. Deshayes notes that *eured* was first recorded in the sixteenth century as *euret* and derives from ‘vieux breton *eurit, composé de *eu*, bon, favorable, et de *rit* issu d’un celtique *(*p*)rit ou du latin *oratus*, prière’ (*Dictionnaire étymologique de breton* (Douarnenez, Finistère, 2003), s.v. ‘eured’).

56 James, *Marvels*, p. 32.

57 E. Schröder, ‘Die Tänzer von Kälbigk: Ein Mirakel des 11. Jahrhunderts’, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 17 (1897), 94–164, at 96–98, 123 and 135.

58 R.A.B. Mynors, ed. and trans., completed by R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, *William of Malmesbury, Gesta regum Anglorum: the History of the English Kings*, OMT, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1998–1999) II, 160.

59 A facsimile of this text in Orderic’s hand (lat. 6503, fol. 61r) is available in J. Lair, *Matériaux pour l’édition de Guillaume de Jumièges* (Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1910), pl. 3.

60 P. Flöbert, *La vie ancienne de Saint Samson de Dol*, Sources d’histoire médiévale (Paris, 1997), p. 216. There are even menhirs named after this adventure in the saint’s life (p. 16).

A final point deserves to be made regarding the ‘dancer’ accretions. The second of the three folk tales (fol. 5iv) relates the cursing by the priest Odo of certain women who lived in England (*muliercularum in brittania quam et anglia uocatur*). To specify England in this fashion seems redundant in a manuscript written primarily for an English audience. Its inclusion, however, suggests a Continental origin for this narrative.

Evidence Concerning ‘Opusculum de ratione spere’

The astronomical portions of Bodley 614 are taken from an anonymous compilation that survives in four manuscripts and is known as *Opusculum de ratione spere*.⁶¹ Unlike the previous pieces of evidence, the *Opusculum* section does not suggest a continental exemplar. Some introductory remarks may be made, however, which are relevant to Bodley 614 as a context for the *Wonders*. First, Bodley 614 is closer on both art historical and textual grounds to Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 83 than it is to any of the other surviving witnesses. None of the Continental manuscripts of the *Opusculum* contains the images of the constellations common to Bodley 614 and its relative. All the manuscripts contain diagrams and charts but only at one point – to accompany a short text on the Pleiades and Hyades – do all four volumes contain similar illustrations. Similarly, the Digby text proves the most complete when compared to the Erfurt, Hanover and Wrocław manuscripts. Its text is preserved in a different order, however, from the Continental versions. For example, most of the astronomical material in Bodley 614 is taken from what Digby 83 preserves in the fourth book of the *Opusculum*. No fourth book is extant in the Erfurt volume – although there is the possibility that it was once included – and some parts of Book IV are omitted from the Hanover and Wrocław manuscripts.⁶² On the other hand, some of Digby’s Book IV material is preserved in Book I of the Continental manuscripts.

61 The text survives in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 83 (s. xii^{med}); Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek, Dep. Erf. ca. Q. 23 (s. xii; *olim* Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche Allgemeinbibliothek, Amploniana Q. 23); Hanover, Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek, IV. 394 (s. xiii); and Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, IV. 8° 11 (s. xii). Whether it is proper to describe the Bodley text one of the *nugae Hyginianae* (as Wilma Fitzgerald does) or a *recensio interpolata* of Hyginus (as does Kristen Lippincott) concerns the ultimate, rather than the immediate, source of part of the text. As such it is not germane to this discussion (see the identifications listed in Ford, ‘Contexts’, pp. 39–52). Cf. W. Fitzgerald, ‘Nugae Hyginianae’, *Essays in Honour of Anton Charles Pegis*, ed. J.R.O’Donnell (Toronto, 1974), pp. 193–204 (at 198); also the material on Hyginus’s *De astronomia* available through Kristen Lippincott’s ‘Saxl Project’ at <<http://www.kristenlippincott.com/the-saxl-project/manuscripts/classical-literary-tradition/hyginus-de-astronomia/>>. A full facsimile of Digby 83 is available at *Early Manuscripts at Oxford University*, <<http://image.ox.ac.uk/>>.

62 For the structure of the *Opusculum* see Ford, ‘Contexts’, pp. 282–306.

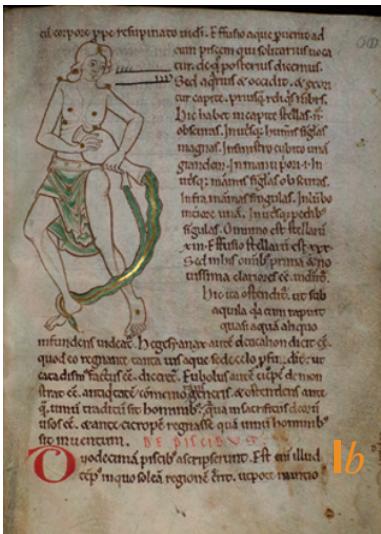


FIGURE 27 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 21v (left) and 22r (right)

Two things may be deduced from these initial observations: first, that Bodley 614 was copied from a manuscript of the Digby part of the *Opusculum* family for not only does Digby 83 have illustrations which are not extant in the other *Opusculum* manuscripts, it has text which is not extant in them either; and, secondly, that Bodley 614 was not copied directly from Digby 83.⁶³

The first point may be easily demonstrated. As may be seen in Fig. 27, the section *De piscibus* in Bodley 614 (fol. 21v-22r) may be broken into three subsections (*a*, *b* and *c*), all three of which are found also in Digby. The Hanover manuscript only records section *b*, while sections *b* and *c* may be found in the Wrocław manuscript; the text is not extant in the Erfurt witness. Moreover, as may be seen from Fig. 28, the sections in Bodley have been reordered. If we are

⁶³ For example, when compared to the Bodley text of *De signis zodiaci*, it can be seen that the Digby, Hanover and Wrocław volumes omit Bodley's introductory section and the sections on Cancer and Leo are missing from Hanover and Wrocław. Lacking Book IV, the Erfurt manuscript omits the whole text. See the tabulations of *De signis zodiaci* and *De signis coeli* in Ford, 'Contexts', pp. 40 and 47.



Commencet et adhuc esse sperant: ne bellum nisi adhuc
parat. Ad eccepsam in confutam in Unum summa-
bent communione quae pede ornat pugnare, ut
greci ex iusta proportione non sive auctoritate deo-
rum, sed ratione dignitatem ex nostra manu pugnare: sed
est enim hoc. Quia in talibus acutis pede, in mediocri
de quinquefimis signatur. Et si loquimur inconfutabili
communione, sed tunc emendata, multa contumelias
one circulus noctis pugnare significari. Quare cum in pugna
sit ea solitas noctis appellatur pugna, tanta quod
cum cupido ad hanc cunctam manent, abe-
scunt et maximis doctilis hanc apparetur noscitur.
Quo enim pugna: fons pugnae? Aliqua, inflata se
tempore amplexu pugnare, quo facit quadratum. Inde pug-
na in multis locis primi sunt, pugnare capte delectantur.
ne simili causa, ut pugna frangatur undante, aut
ex corpore capte. Heraclitus autem dicit, hoc est pugnare,
de eo poterit dicitur sum.

His enim, ut dico, quas non habent, erunt
potestos, etiam pars, quod ad eum referuntur,
cuius invenientur. Confinguntur quatuor reges
nomina, quas politices ingenuo merita metuunt
sum, ut fabulus fidei ambo incepit, ut et
genuit phlebopis plena ambo, alio in humeris, facili
legit sum fructuorum, coniuncte sericea, etiam parte
eius fallacissima, et manca, dicentes redi confusione et
humerosus rugis genitos. Decepunt enim atque om
ni, qui fidem et hellebem sicut et phelli, sponte instulari.

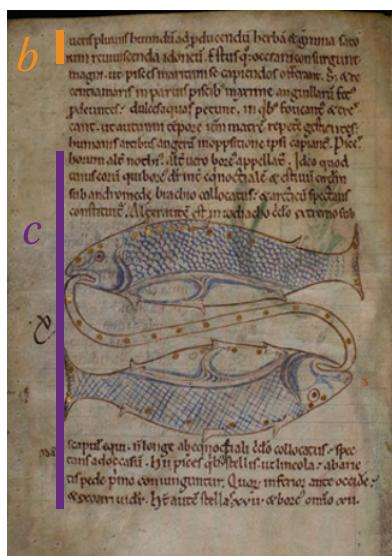


FIGURE 28 *Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 83, fols. 58r-59r*

able to assume that the text of Bodley's exemplar was in the same order as Digby 83, this reordering shows a considerable degree of scribal engagement and is consonant with the corrections to the Tiberius B. v text made by the scribe when copying the *Wonders*.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Gibb, 'Critical Edition', p. 13; cf. pp. 133–134 below.

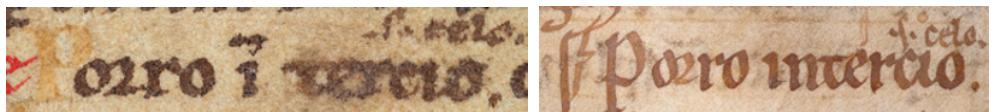


FIGURE 29 Left: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 22v (detail);
Right: Bodleian Library, Digby 83, fol. 33r (detail)



FIGURE 30
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 83, fol. 52r
(detail)

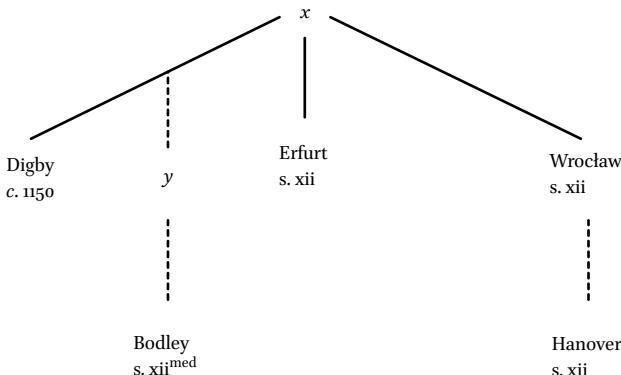
If the illuminations and large portions of text were not sufficient to demonstrate the relationship between Bodley and a manuscript of the Digby type, the following page (fol. 22v) preserves a correction to the text in the form of an interlineation which is found only in the two Oxford manuscripts (Fig. 29). In the Continental witnesses, the words *scilicet celo* are included as part of the main text and not given as interlineations.⁶⁵ At this point in the *Opusculum* the text does not follow its source in the *Historia naturalis* particularly closely. Since this excerpt comes from a text which circulated independently of the *Opusculum* and, given that I have been able to examine only two other manuscripts in which it occurs, it is not possible to say with certainty whether this phraseology is particular to the *Opusculum*. However, it can be said with confidence that the phrase as it occurs in the Oxford manuscripts is not a gloss but was originally a scribal insertion to supply some missing text.

Two further pieces of evidence may be presented. The first does not have authority in relation the whole corpus of *Opusculum* manuscripts

⁶⁵ For the location of this text in the Continental witnesses, see the tabulation of *De VII planetis* in Ford, 'Contexts', p. 43.



FIGURE 31 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 34r

FIGURE 32 *Stemma. Opusculum de ratione spere*

since the portion involved, *De pegaso*, is only extant in Bodley 614 (fol. 30r) and Digby 83 (fols. 51v-52r). It does, however, serve to clarify the relationship of the Oxford manuscripts. There is an error in the text relating how Pegasus opened a spring on Mount Helicon by stamping the rock with his hoof. In both Bodley and Digby, the correct reading *ungula* (hoof) has been replaced with the more surreal *uirgula* (small stick, or punctuation mark). In Bodley, the error remains uncorrected; in Digby, it has been corrected (Fig. 30). The evidence of the ink and the form of the n suggest that the correction was made by the main scribe when re-reading the text, presumably for sense rather than checking his text against another copy.

The second piece of evidence concerns text common to all the manuscripts. This text on comets is common to all the copies of the *Opusculum* and comprises a passage from Isidore's *Etymologiae* and some text unique – as far as I am aware – to the *Opusculum*. The version in Bodley 614, however, introduces a sentence from William of Conches's *De philosophia mundi* (III.xiii) which is unique to this witness, further proof that Bodley was not copied from its companion in Oxford (Fig. 31; inc. *Quidam uero, exp. accensus*).

From these observations, and the evidence of other textual variants, it can be seen that Bodley 614 and Digby 83 are two closely-related but different branches of the *Opusculum* family. A tentative *stemma* might thus be offered (Fig. 32).

Summary

It can be seen that Bodley 614 was copied by an engaged and intelligent scribe. The *Wonders* were taken directly from Tiberius B. v and its textual infelicities

were tidied up; the astronomical section was compiled from a manuscript of *Opusculum de ratione spere* with a copy of *De philosophia mundi* near at hand.

Because we know that Tiberius B. v was at Battle Abbey in the 1150s, the question whether Battle is the site where Bodley was copied must be considered if the above analysis of its date is accepted. The Battle scriptorium was able to produce some very pleasing books although none of the extant volumes is particularly grand, despite the monastery being a royal peculiar and very wealthy.⁶⁶ Those which survive show an interest in a wide range of authors: Constantinus Africanus, Richard of Préaux and Joseph of Exeter from among recent Latin writers; Wace, Pseudo-Turpin, and the 'Miracle of Sardenai' from vernacular literature.⁶⁷ The 'Battle Chronicle' demonstrates a lively engagement with recent history and law.⁶⁸ The library at Battle was not, then, one focused narrowly on the Church Fathers nor one in which the astronomy and marvels of Bodley 614, or any of its sources, would have been out of place.⁶⁹

That, however, is conjecture and much the same could be said of other southern monasteries in the twelfth century. In the absence of other evidence only a localised and dateable palaeographical *comparandum* could tie Bodley 614 to a scriptorium with any certainty. The entries for 1170 and 1171 in the 'Battle Annals' might well provide such but the sample is, admittedly, too small to make a positive identification. Although I find them suggestive, they alone cannot resolve the question of Bodley's origin. Unless

66 Battle was the fifteenth richest monastery in England at the time of the Domesday survey with a gross income of £212 3s. 2d. See Appendix VI in D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 702–703. Cited by E. Searle, *Lordship and Community: Battle Abbey and its Banlieu, 1066–1538*, Stud. and Texts 26 (Toronto, 1974), p. 23.

67 Respectively, London, BL, Add. 22719 (s. xii); Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 724 (s. xii^{ex}) and Digby 157 (s. xii/xiii); London, BL, Royal 4 C. xi (s. xii-xiiiⁱⁿ) and Cotton Domitian ii (s. xii^{ex}).

68 On the 'Battle Chronicle' see E. Searle, *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, OMT (Oxford, 1980); also the problems raised by M. Brett in his untitled review of Searle's edition in *MÆ* 50 (1981), 319–22 and N. Vincent, 'King Henry II and the Monks of Battle: the Battle Chronicle Unmasked', *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting*, ed. R. Gameson and H. Leyser (Oxford, 2001), pp. 264–286.

69 An account in the 'Battle Chronicle' tells that the Abbey presented a copy of Jerome's letters to the cathedral chapter at Chichester around 1120 but it is not told whether the text was written especially for presentation (Searle, *Chronicle*, p. 126).

further evidence comes to light, the question of its origin remains open but it would not be imprudent to refer to the manuscript in these terms: ?Battle, s. xii^{med.}.

It remains for the *Wonders* to be discussed in the context of Bodley 614. Before this can be done effectively, the social relations of the 'twelfth-century renaissance' – of which Bodley 614 is clearly a part – must be established.

The Social Relations of the 'Twelfth-Century Renaissance'

The comments of Richard Southern on the economic and the scholastic expansions of the 'twelfth-century renaissance' provide a good starting-point for a discussion of the social relations of the period: 'Without economic growth and the consequent formation of relatively well-organized instruments of government, a very large part of the scholastic activity of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries would have been impossible, and the development of western Christendom would have run along different lines'.⁷⁰ Schools and, latterly, the universities - clerical in both nature and composition - were the structuring agents of a new societal dispensation which began in the twelfth century. New classes or, if not entire classes, newly distinguishable social strata were formed of the scholars who taught and the professionals and administrators who progressed through their training. The social function of a manuscript such as Bodley 614 and, in turn, the ideological purpose of the *Wonders* is best understood in this context.

The twelfth and thirteenth centuries were a period of population growth which continued until the 'overall slowdown in population growth in the first half of the fourteenth century' was exacerbated by the arrival of the Black Death.⁷¹ Between 1050 and 1200, the period relevant to Bodley 614, the population of the British Isles rose 'from 1.5 million to over 2 million' and of France 'from 6 to 9 million'.⁷² This demographic change is generally credited with the creation of economic growth, particularly in rural areas, and a series of governmental and administrative challenges that were met mostly in the towns. The skills necessary to meet these challenges were provided by the schools. 'The circle', as Southern has it, 'was complete':

⁷⁰ Southern, *Scholastic Humanism I*, 134–135.

⁷¹ J. Langdon and J. Masschaele, 'Commercial Activity and Population Growth in Medieval England', *Past & Present* 190 (2006), 35–81, at 76.

⁷² R. Fossier, 'The Rural Economy and Demographic Growth', *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. IV, c. 1024–c. 1198, pt 1, ed. D. Luscombe and J. Riley-Smith (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 11–46 (at 13).

the problems of organized government demanded more elaborate and costly procedures than those which had sufficed in the past; the new wealth of a rapidly-expanding population stimulated the growth of the schools which could provide solutions to these problems; the most easily disposable part of this new wealth consisted of the tithes of a growing agricultural population; and this source of revenue helped to support both those who were teaching or studying in the schools and those who had left the schools to engage in the work of government.⁷³

Moreover, these economic developments saw increased ‘differentiation’ in ‘occupational structures’ (but not to the extent that specialization itself may be read as a marker of increased economic productivity).⁷⁴ The newly differentiated administrative and bureaucratic roles which were the practical outcome of the schools may be considered part of this same phenomenon.

Thus stated, the problem of the relationship of the schools and their thought to the society which sustained them is the classic Marxian problem of the relation between the economic base and its ideological superstructure. As Marx aphorized in the ‘Preface’ to the 1859 edition of *A Critique of Political Economy*, ‘it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness’.⁷⁵ In such a formulation the doctrines of the schools are not simply representations, understood reductively, of a given economic arrangement; neither are they unimpeded by the historical situation in which they found themselves.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the twelfth century came to be a ‘golden age of careerism via the schools’ given that ‘the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force’.⁷⁶ As

73 Southern, *Scholastic Humanism* 1, 143–144.

74 R.H. Britnell, ‘Specialization of Work in England, 1100–1300’, *Economic Hist. Rev.* 54, n.s (2001), 1–16. The comments from his concluding paragraph are relevant here: ‘If we are looking for a label to describe the effects of commercial development on the occupational structure, differentiation would be better than specialization. Like the concept of specialization, differentiation implies a movement away from work routines on the land in the course of commercial development, and is compatible with some measure of successful specialization. Unlike the concept of specialization, it does not suggest the creation of any secure and all-embracing new institutional structure. It is a wider concept than specialization, and includes both specialization and causalization as its two extremes’ (p. 14).

75 Quoted by S.H. Rigby, ‘Historical Materialism: Social Structure and Social Change in the Middle Ages’, *Jnl of Med. and Early Mod. Stud.* 34 (2004), 473–522, at 488.

76 The first phrase is Alexander Murray’s, quoted in Stephen C. Ferruolo, *The Origins of the University: the Schools of Paris and their Critics, 1100–1215* (Stanford, CA, 1985), p. 93. The second is Karl Marx’s, quoted in Rigby, ‘Historical Materialism’, p. 491.

Stephen Ferrulo notes, in the initial stages of their development, '[t]he expanding bureaucracies of secular and ecclesiastical courts probably offered more than enough positions for those trained in the schools'.⁷⁷ One of the functions of the ideological superstructure – in this case the schools and, eventually, the universities – is to reproduce functionally the economic relations of the base.⁷⁸

In the article already cited, John Langdon and James Masschaele give the following developments as evidence of progressive commercialization during the twelfth century: 1) the proliferation of markets and fairs; 2) the development of ports; 3) the growth of agrarian products for export, particularly wool; and 4) the development of infrastructure (bridges, churches, castles, etc.) and the use of new technologies (e.g. the windmill).⁷⁹ None of these can develop without an advanced cash economy to sustain them or an administrative structure to provide governance.⁸⁰ To this list should be added the character of holding land, which became increasingly complex in its obligations during the twelfth century, and the monetization that accompanied it. Obligations which once might have taken the form of labour, service, or renders in kind were increasingly commuted to payments of money, even among villeins.

The description of a parcel of land as 'a fifth of a third part of a fee of one knight' illustrates how estates had ramified in the course of years. It is easy to imagine that on a well-organized estate a group of tenants holding large fractional fees, a half, a third, or a quarter, might make some arrangement among themselves for the performance of the service by a plan of election or rotation, a practice which is known to have obtained at the abbeys of St Albans and Ramsey and elsewhere. But it is scarcely

⁷⁷ Ferruolo, *Origins*, pp. 95–96.

⁷⁸ Thus any educational system 'produces and reproduces the necessary conditions for the exercise of its internal function of inculcating, which are at the same time the sufficient conditions for the fulfilment of its external function of reproducing the legitimate culture and for its correlative contribution towards reproducing the power relations' (P. Bourdieu and J.-C. Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, trans. R. Nice, 2nd ed. (London and Thousand Oaks, CA, 1990), p. 67).

⁷⁹ Langdon and Masschaele, 'Commercial Activity', pp. 42–54.

⁸⁰ The career of William Cade, a money-lender in the court of Henry II, is an example of how closely connected finance and administration were. As Hilary Jenkinson noted, 'not only did he finance the Crown but his private loans also were in some, perhaps in many, cases closely connected with Exchequer business' ('A Money-Lender's Bonds of the Twelfth Century', *Essays in History Presented to Reginald Lane Poole*, ed. H.W.C. Davis (Oxford, 1927), pp. 190–210 (at 197)).

conceivable that such a system could be established for holders of minute and scattered fractions. The service of these could only be reckoned in terms of cash.⁸¹

Across the Norman empire the need to regulate these developments required 'a multitude of officials, compared by Peter of Blois to an army of locusts'.⁸²

Being key functionaries in the ideological superstructure, scribes reproduced in their own division of labour a microcosm of the relations they sustained. As Michael Clanchy notes, the 'increasing mass of royal documents tended to enlarge and stratify the bureaucracy which produced them'.⁸³ The same may be seen in the commercialization of certain aspects of book production. Professional scribes were available for hire throughout the twelfth century and monasteries across England made provision in their customaries for their rates of pay. Michael Gullick's conclusions on the subject are worth quoting in full:

Taking into account the number of cathedrals, monasteries and other enclosed communities in England, and the vast number of manuscripts which must have been written either at or for them, the total sum of the evidence concerning the activities of professional scribes is small. Despite this the evidence may have a greater importance than its sum suggests. That St Albans could employ a number of professionals in the late eleventh century and Abingdon six in the early twelfth suggests that there was a pool of professional scribes available for hire. It is inconceivable that St Albans and Abingdon were peculiar places suddenly able to call upon professional scribes from nowhere. It is likely that other places were able to call upon their services too.⁸⁴

⁸¹ A.L. Poole, *Obligations of Society in the XIII and XIV Centuries* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 45–46.

⁸² C.H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions*, Harvard Hist. Stud. 24 (Cambridge, MA, 1918), p. 182.

⁸³ See M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1993), p. 62. Clanchy follows this observation with a telling example from the *Dialogus de scaccario* (1.v) showing the different status of scribes relative to the functions they perform at the Exchequer table.

⁸⁴ M. Gullick, 'Professional Scribes in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century England', *EMS* 7 (1998), 1–24, at 14–15; cf. Ker, *English Manuscripts*, pp. 10–11. See also Gullick's related article, 'How Fast Did Scribes Write? Evidence from Romanesque Manuscripts', *Making the Medieval Book: Techniques of Production*, ed. L.L. Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, CA, and London, 1995), pp. 39–58.

Other elements of manuscript production – with the apparent exception of binding which, at this period, was most likely a scribe's activity⁸⁵ – were contracted to artists, sometimes with peripatetic careers, such as Master Hugo or the anonymous 'Alexis' and 'Simon' Masters.⁸⁶ Indeed, the growing presence of illuminators in the historical record is the first trace of a commercial book trade in London and Oxford towards the end of the century.⁸⁷ In Paris, earlier evidence shows that scribes were available 'for hire before the middle of the twelfth century' and 'accounts of payment jotted down in manuscript flyleaves, and written or sketched instructions for illumination noted in the margins [of manuscripts]...reflect a division of labour indicative of craftsmen working for a contractor'.⁸⁸

It may be seen that the tendency to differentiation and abstraction in the work of the schools and their *magistri* is related to the regulation of economic exchange (i.e. the increased commercialization of the period in question) and in the division of labour of the administration which supported it. It is this which provides the key to the social relations of this period and must inform our reading of Bodley 614.

85 Michael Gullick's comments are, again, worth quoting in full: 'There is nothing in most 12th century bindings I have seen to make me doubt that they were usually made soon after the writing and decoration of their leaves had been completed. I believe binding was regarded as an integral part of the book production process in monastic scriptoria when manuscripts were often manufactured for local use. That is to say, most of the productions of 12th century monastic houses were made, used and kept within the houses in which they were manufactured. Little is known for certain about the scribes and decorators and even less is known about the binders. However, our modern tendency to regard these activities as separate and distinct was probably taken far less seriously by our 12th-century ancestors' ('From Scribe to Binder: Quire Tackets in Twelfth Century European Manuscripts', *Roger Powell, the Compleat Binder: Liber Amicorum*, ed. J.L. Sharpe, *Bibliologia* 14 (Turnhout, 1996), pp. 240–259 (at 249)).

86 Master Hugo was the artist of the 'Bury Bible' (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 2; c. 1130–35); the work of the 'Alexis' and 'Simon' Masters may be seen in Cambridge, King's College 19 (s. xiiⁱⁿ) and Cambridge, Trinity College O. 5. 8 (s. xii^{3/3}) respectively. See P. Binski and S. Panayatova, *The Cambridge Illuminations: Ten Centuries of Book Production in the Medieval West* (London and Turnhout, 2005), cat. nos. 19, 24 and 27.

87 M.A. Michael, 'English Illuminators c. 1190–1450: a Survey from Documentary Sources', *EMS* 4 (1993), 62–113.

88 R.H. Rouse and M.A. Rouse, *Manuscripts and their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500*, 2 vols. (Turnhout, 2000) I, 26 and 30–31 respectively.

Bodley 614 and the Practice of the Schools

In his discussion of the didactic qualities amid the seeming disarray of the ‘Walters Cosmography’, a late twelfth-century computistical compendium, Harry Bober wrote that it was ‘not the product of an individual scholar in a lone scriptorium but a composition which develop[ed] through the practice of schools, whose cumulative marks may still be observed’.⁸⁹ Although Bober does not enumerate them exactly, we may infer from the remainder of his article what is included among these marks: a selective, almost ‘editorial’ consciousness when compiling or assembling texts; the presence of self-aware commentary upon these texts; and the prevalence of illustrations and diagrams, ‘visual instruments, artfully forged in a proven pedagogic tradition... always integral with the text’.⁹⁰ It is these ‘cumulative marks’ which situate Bodley 614 and the *Wonders* so clearly in the intellectual world of the ‘twelfth-century renaissance’ and its social relations.

Selection and Compilation

That the scribe of Bodley 614 was selective in compiling the astronomical portion when choosing portions from *Opusculum de ratione spere* and engaging with William of Conches has already been demonstrated. Given the connection between Tiberius B. v and Bodley 614 it is possible that the additions to the *Wonders* are an innovation of the Bodley scribe. With the exception of the ‘fighting brothers’ and the parallels to the ‘Dancers of Colbeck’, all the additions are taken from Isidore’s *Etymologiae*.⁹¹

There is evidence of scribal arrangement within most sections beyond the task of selecting passages from Isidore. The texts on the Sciopods, Antipodes and Hippopodes, which follow each other directly in the *Etymologiae*, are taken almost verbatim from Isidore’s text and may have constituted a single entry in the mind of the scribe. All of the others show some form of ‘editing’. For example, the scribe contextualizes the three extracts by placing the rhinoceros, the golden mountains, and the chameleon in India with the phrases *Est in India* and *Sunt et in India* (fols. 48v and 49r). Similarly, the text concerning men

89 Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W. 73 (s. xii/xiii). H. Bober, ‘An Illustrated Medieval School-Book of Bede’s *De natura rerum*’, *Jnl of the Walters Art Gallery* 19/20 (1956/57), 65–97, at 69. See also L. Cleaver, ‘On the Nature of Things: the Content and Purpose of Walters W. 73 and Decorated Treatises on Natural Philosophy in the Twelfth Century’, *Jnl of the Walters Art Museum* 68/69 (2010/11), 21–30.

90 Bober, ‘Medieval School-Book’, p. 81.

91 For the sources in the *Etymologiae* see Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 22.

with prominent lips (fol. 50v) begins part way through Isidore's original and omits a sentence beginning *Aliae sine naribus* which Isidore uses to link his text. The paragraph on parrots (fol. 51r) also omits the clause beginning *ita ut* from its source text.

Most interesting, however, is a new identification not made by Orchard. The text on satyrs is not taken solely from Isidore (*Etymologiae*, xi.iii.21) but contains a phrase from Jerome's *Vita Pauli* (viii). The text in Bodley reads (fol. 50v/9-12) as below. The words in italics are Isidore's; those in bold are Jerome's.

Satiri homuntiones sunt. aduncis naribus. fronte cornibus asperata. cuius extrema pars corporis in caprarum pedes desinit. qualem in solitudinem sanctus antonius uidit.⁹²

The scribe has taken the reference to St Antony's vision in Isidore and made a seamless, 'hypertextual' link between it and another Antony text. This is typical of this scribe's method of working as seen in his selections from the *Opusculum* and, as Paul Allen Gibb showed, his re-writing of the Tiberius B. v phoenix section with portions of Isidore and Ambrose.⁹³

Self-Aware Commentary

The gloss to fol. 17v – the origin of which has already been demonstrated – is a clear example of self-aware commentary. Although at this point it cannot be shown to be part of wider family of glosses, the mythological subject matter and its mode of presentation are more important than any putative relationship with a particular tradition of glossing. The fact that the scribe was sufficiently engaged with the content to expand it when an appropriate opportunity arose locates Bodley 614 in a broad sense within the 'practice' of the schools.⁹⁴

An Illustrative Tradition

That Bodley 614 is part of a tradition of astronomical illustration which may be traced back to the Classical period has been shown eloquently by Fritz Saxl.⁹⁵

92 'Satyrs are homunculi, with crooked noses, roughened fore-hooves, and the furthest part of the body ends in the feet of a she-goat. St Antony saw this sort in the wilderness' (my translation). P. Leclerc, E.M. Morales and A. de Vogué, *Jérôme. Trois vies de moines (Paul, Malchus, Hilarion)*, Sources Chrétienennes 508 (Paris, 2007), p. 160. Jerome's description uses the imperfect tense (*desinebat*) rather than the present (*desinit*).

93 Gibb, 'Critical Edition', p. 178.

94 Bober, 'Medieval School-Book', p. 69.

95 See, for example, 'Illuminated Science Manuscripts in England', in his *Lectures*, 2 vols. (London, 1957) I, 96–110.

More recent work by Rembrant Duits has traced the development of constellation cycles in manuscripts from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries.⁹⁶ Bodley 614 and its relative Digby 83 are (with some qualification) a variation on those illustrative cycles which accompanied Hyginus's *De astronomia* although, as Duits puts it, in these instances '[t]he illustrations are new designs without much reference to the tradition'. Indeed, that the arrangement of the astronomical section in Bodley 614 does not follow the same pattern as Digby 83 causes Duits to follow Fritz Saxl and comment that the 'positioning of the Zodiac signs at the beginning...suggests an interest in astrology'.⁹⁷ Whether it does or not, this arrangement of the visual elements forms an interesting parallel to the selection of textual elements.

It may be noted in passing that the *rota* of winds on fol. 34v is also part of a long tradition which was developing in response to changes in cosmological thought during the twelfth century.⁹⁸

The Mythographic Mode

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, fable and myth were employed in the twelfth century as a mode of intellectual discourse which was 'both means of cognition and means of mystification'.⁹⁹ It has been demonstrated that the astronomical section of Bodley 614 is part of this larger cultural impulse; it remains to show how the *Wonders* may be read in the same manner. This can be accomplished with reference to the stories that the twelfth-century schools called *integumenta*.

The word *integumentum* means literally a 'covering' or 'wrap' but Bernard Silvestris's definition can be taken to indicate the meaning of the term to the schools: *Integumentum est genus demonstrationis sub fabulosa narratione, veritatis involvens intellectum; unde et involucrum dicitur*.¹⁰⁰ William of

96 R. Duits, 'Celestial Transmissions: an Iconographical Classification of Constellation Cycles in Manuscripts (8th–15th Centuries)', *Scriptorium* 59 (2005), 147–202.

97 Both quotations are from Duits, 'Celestial Transmissions', p. 163. Fritz Saxl also claimed the same thing in 'The Belief in Stars in the Twelfth Century', in his *Lectures*, 2 vols. (London, 1957) I, 85–95 (at 88).

98 B. Obrist, 'Wind Diagrams and Medieval Cosmology', *Speculum* 72 (1997), 33–84, at 75–84.

99 Dronke, *Fabula*, p. 47.

100 'An *integumentum* is a type of demonstrative oratory within a fabulous story, wrapping the meaning of truth; from this it is called a covering'. Quoted in M.-D. Chenu, '*Invulucrum: Le mythe selon les théologiens médiévaux*', *AHMA* 22 (1956), 75–79, at 76. Also in É. Jeauneau, 'L'usage de la notion d'*integumentum* à travers les gloses de Guillaume de Conches', *AHMA* 24 (1957), 35–100, at 38; and Dronke, *Fabula*, p. 25, n. 3. The translation is mine.

Conches noted that celestial *integumenta* may be read ‘in terms of myth, astrology, or astronomy’. On this account myth has an essentially mnemonic function and by it ‘we know something about each particular constellation’. To discuss the celestial beings astrologically ‘is to state what appears to be there, whether that really be so or not’; whereas to read them astronomically ‘is to declare what is true about the stars, whether it seems to be so or not’.¹⁰¹ Peter Dronke has identified in a Florentine manuscript a series of glosses ‘based on William’s teaching’ that show a similar model of reading.¹⁰² Using the story of Hymanaeus as an example, the glosses identify three parallel modes, ‘the narrative, whether realistic or fabulous, the scientific, and the philosophical’ (*historica sive fabulosa, physica et philosophica*).¹⁰³ These two accounts are essentially analogous and may be paired: the narrative with the mythic (performing the mnemonic function); the scientific and the astrological (stating what appears to be true); and the philosophical with the astronomical (declaring what is true). It may be seen, then, that the term *integumentum* implies the possibility of multivalent readings but one further point needs to be made. In the thought of William of Conches, the term *integumentum* carries its own multivalency. As Dronke puts it, *integumentum* ‘can mean both a fable that covers hidden meanings (especially moral and cosmological ones), and the hidden meaning of the fables themselves. The *integumentum* is primarily the covering, but also what is covered by it – so closely are the two related in William’s thought’.¹⁰⁴ Here we have a hermeneutic derived from the schools which may be applied as much to the *Wonders* as the astronomical section of Bodley 614.

We will concentrate on the narrative accretions in Bodley 614 - rather than the Isidore additions, or the marvels common to the three *Wonders* manuscripts that

¹⁰¹ William distinguishes these modes in the *De philosophia mundi* (III.ix-x) and the *Dragmaticon* (III.ii.11-12). The text in *Dragmaticon* reads: *Tribus modis loquuntur auctores de superioribus, uidelicet fabulose, astrologice, astronomice...Quod genus tractandi maxime est necessarium: eo enim scimus de unoquoque signo in qua parte caeli sit, quot stellae sint in eo et quomodo dispositae. Astrologice uero de eisdem tractare est ea quae in eis uidentur, siue ita sit siue non, dicere. Multa enim in superioribus uidentur esse, quae ibi non sunt, quia fallitur uisis...Astronomice autem de eisdem tractare est ea quae de stellis uera sunt, siue ita uideatur siue non, pronuntiare* (Ronca, *Dragmaticon*, pp. 61–62). The translation is from I. Ronca and M. Curr, *William of Conches. A Dialogue on Natural Philosophy*, Notre Dame Texts in Med. Culture 2 (Notre Dame, IN, 1997), p. 41.

¹⁰² Dronke, *Fabula*, p. 101.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 102 and 114 respectively.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 25; on the term *involucrum*, p. 56, n. 2. It is worth noting that the terms *integumentum* and *invulucrum* were synonymous to Bernard and to Abelard (Jeauneau, ‘L’usage’, p. 37) but they did not have the ambiguity of William’s usage.

FIGURE 33A *Baldishol Tapestry*

resurireb. in se oib; misera fata portendunt. soioe
eox illis pugnancib; flente.

FIGURE 33B *Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 49v (detail)*

constitute the core of the text - for three reasons. First, the twelve accretions combined in Bodley 614 are its particular contribution to the paradoxographic tradition and the two narrative sections are especially interesting because they do not derive from a Christian *auctor*. Secondly, *integumenta* are by definition narratives. Catalogue texts or simple descriptions may prompt readings as *integumenta* – as seems to be the intention in Bodley 614 – but this presupposes a certain para- or inter- textual competence on the part of the reader which is not easily re-constructed in the absence of other evidence. Thirdly, while the majority of the *Wonders* are not presented in narrative form, their subjects are easily narrativized. This can be seen in the earlier epistolical narratives so closely related to the *Wonders* and the later developments of the paradoxographic tradition in the letter of Prester John, the travels of John Mandeville and Marco Polo, and the moralizing marvels to be found in bestiaries. The tale of the fighting brothers and the three stories of the dancing women are examples of this impulse.

The Fighting Brothers

The story of the fighting brothers has, as Kemp Malone noted, been transposed from its original, Germanic settings of Scandinavia and the Orkneys to Asia.¹⁰⁵ It is a traditional story relocated to the 'East' but the transposition is not entirely successful. For example, the illustration of the fighting brothers accompanying the text presents them in long, Scandinavian dress. This is not dissimilar to the figure representing May in the twelfth-century 'Baldishol Tapestry' now in the Kunstmuseum, Oslo (Fig. 33a).¹⁰⁶ The initial associations of the story could not however be easily discarded or disguised, resisting complete assimilation to the 'East' in the mind of the compiler. This may indicate that the relocation to Asia was not the consequence of a long period of retelling, during which the Scandinavian elements eventually atrophied, but a change closer in time to Bodley 614 if not the work of the Bodley scribe himself.

The setting of Asia may be read in the 'astronomical/philosophical' mode described above. Discourses concerning the 'East' have famously been read against an equivalent discourse of the 'West'.¹⁰⁷ While it is tempting to think of the

¹⁰⁵ K. Malone, 'An Anglo-Latin Version of the Hjaðningavíg', *Speculum* 39 (1964), 35–44, at 40, n. 18.

¹⁰⁶ I am grateful to Prof. Gale Owen-Crocker for this reference.

¹⁰⁷ Thus, for example, Edward Said writing of a later period: 'Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions...it is an *elaboration* not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains...' (E.W. Said, *Orientalism* (London, 1978), p. 12).

symbolic 'East' as a praxis derived from the intercourse between Western Europe and its 'other', whether construed as Asia or Africa, the 'East' remains a symbolic praxis rooted in local social relations. To repeat a point made earlier, it was the social world of Anglo-Saxon and post-Conquest England which gave rise to the discourse of the 'East' in the *Wonders*, not the relations between one symbol (the 'East') and another (the 'West'). This can be seen clearly in the disjunction between the text and the illustration.

Kemp Malone saw 'an obviously Christian touch' in the tale when the brothers stop their fighting on Sundays, as did M.R. James before him.¹⁰⁸ Christianization of the *Wonders* was well under way in the additions to Tiberius B. v and the process continued in Bodley 614.¹⁰⁹ But neither James nor Malone notes that there is an echo of the 'Truce of God' in the fact that the fighting ceases '*Ab hora uero nona sabbati*' and resumes '*prima hora secunde ferie*'. These times were the precisely the limits set at the Council of Toulouges in 1027 during which fighting was prohibited 'that all men should pay the honour owed to the Lord's day' (*ut omnis homo persolvat debitum honorem die Dominico*).¹¹⁰ Reading this text in the 'astrological/scientific' mode, this element could be construed as evidence that some curses – presumably the curses of pagans – are ineffectual on Sundays. Reading in the astronomical/philosophical mode – i.e. revealing the *integumentum* 'whether it seems to be so or not' – the reference to the 'Truce of God' points us to the inherent contradiction of 'churchmen who were calling upon the knights to practise internal peace [but] had also set their blessing upon the weapons of their warfare'.¹¹¹

The Dancing Women

The stories of the dancing women are set in Brittany and England. In a contrary movement to the previous tale, here the wondrous nature of the 'East' is transposed to the 'West'. Because comparable events occur in both Brittany and England this marvel cannot be explained by reference to Celtic influence whether that influence is negative, as in Gerald of Wales, or positive, as in

¹⁰⁸ Malone, 'Anglo-Latin Version', p. 40; James, *Marvels*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁹ See pp. 89–102, above.

¹¹⁰ The relevant passage from the Council reads: *Constituerunt itaque praefati episcopi simul cum omni clero et fidelis populo, ut nemo in toto supradicto comitatu vel episcopatu habitans, assalliret aliquem suum inimicum ab hora sabbati nona usque in die Lunis hora prima, ut omnis homo persolvat debitum honorem die Dominico* (G. Mansi, *et al.*, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 56 vols. (Florence, then Venice, then Paris: 1759–1798, 1901–1927) xix, col. 483). On the 'Truce of God', and Toulouges in particular, see H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'The Peace and the Truce of God in the Eleventh Century', *Past & Present* 46 (1970), 42–67, at 44.

¹¹¹ Cowdrey, 'Peace and Truce of God', p. 53.

Marie de France.¹¹² Instead these marvels - for they cannot properly be called miracles - are rendered an ambiguous 'Western' phenomenon.

Read 'astrologically/scientifically' these tales demonstrate the unchecked power of saints and clergy whose words, in the phraseology of the parallel account in William of Malmesbury noted above, have weight (*Verba pondus habuerunt*).¹¹³ They are simple warnings against disobedience, punishments made known 'that all men may clearly see how great is the penalty of disobedience' (*ut omnibus innotescat quanta sit pena inobedientiae*).¹¹⁴ There are, however, significant differences between William of Malmesbury's account and the version found in Bodley 614 which bring into focus an 'astronomical/philosophical' reading.¹¹⁵

In Bodley the dancers are, without exception, women and this is reflected in the accompanying illustration. They are led by their mother in the dance that so upsets St Urri, although the significance of this is difficult to interpret. In contrast, William's version is presented as an eye-witness participant account. There were at Colbeck fifteen men and three women in the dance, one of whom was the daughter of the offended priest of St Magnus's church; there is no mention of a mother. Similarly, rather than occurring during an unnamed feast as in St Urri's story (*die quodam festo*), William's informant gives the day as Christmas Eve.

The shift in gender is as significant as the absence of a date. The women have set their physical bodies against the mystical body of Christ and their punishment is to be received in like form (i.e. in their bodies). The lack of date emphasizes this by drawing attention to the central eucharistic claim of the Church: since every Sunday is a feast in the Christian year, their offence is against Sundays generally rather than an infringement of an annual feast. The curses give their exuberance a form, a channel or course – one is literally worn away as they dance round and round – which both controls it and renders it unthreatening.

A further difference may be seen in the conclusion to these tales. In William's account the dancers are eventually released and reconciled to the Church. Otbert,

¹¹² For example, 'Bisclavret', ll. 259–260: *Meinte merveille avum veü / Quë en Britaigne est avenu* [We have witnessed many marvels happening in Brittany] (text, A. Ewart, *Marie de France: Lais* (Oxford, 1944), p. 55; translation, G.S. Burgess and K. Busby, *The Lais of Marie de France*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth, 1999), p. 71).

¹¹³ Mynors, *Gesta regum Anglorum* I, 296. See above, p. 120.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., I, 294 (text) and 295 (translation).

¹¹⁵ An interesting interpretation of the 'Dancers of Colbeck' – one to which I am sympathetic but do not use in my own reading – is given by H. Kleinschmidt, *Perception and Action in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 42–56.



FIGURE 34 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614, fol. 51v (detail)

the narrator of William's version, reports that after this: *Filia presbiteri cum aliis duobus continuo efflauit, ceteri continua tribus diebus et noctibus dormiuimus. Aliqui postea obierunt et miraculis coruscant, ceteri penam suam tremore membrorum produnt.*¹¹⁶ This is a stark contrast to the deaths of those in Bodley's last story who all die at the end of their curse (*post finem uero anni omnes morte defecerunt*). None of these, or the women in the two prior stories, are offered any redemptive outcome. Those women in Bodley who do not die are cursed to dance until Judgement Day (*ad diem usque iudicii*), and to cry, 'When will the end of the age come?' (*quando ueniet finis seculi*). The priest Odo of the second story has his curse returned and he, too, remains forever fixed to the scene. There is no reconciliation, no possibility of the sainthood implied in the miracles later worked at Colbeck, and no chance of being able to warn others. The Bodley women simply remain marvels, *integumenta* that offer no clue to their interpretation other than lament.

¹¹⁶ 'The priest's daughter and two others at once breathed their last; the rest of us slept for three days and nights without a break. Some died later, and are distinguished by their miracles; others betray their punishment by the shaking of their limbs' (Mynors, *Gesta regum Anglorum* 1, 296 (text) and 297 (translation)).

Conclusion

The last image of the *Wonders* is also the final one of the whole manuscript. It was probably always the final leaf and is now rubbed and worn, presumably from use prior to binding. The image itself, however, is an admirable and ingenious meld of the last three stories into a single composition (Fig. 34).

However, like the stories themselves, it is not hopeful. The accused women have danced for so long that they have worn themselves waist-high into the ground; the brother from the third story holds his sister's detached arm; the priest Odo stands transfixed, holding his book to his chest in an uncanny parallel to the figure of Jamnes on fol. 48r.

This image provides a metaphor for what is essentially the end of the *Wonders* tradition. Bodley 614 represents an attempt to yoke the *Wonders* to the emerging pre-scholastic academy and, in doing so, to put the text within an intellectually acceptable discourse. Ultimately, however, the *Wonders* could not sustain the weight of the claim and were put to other, less savoury uses, pressed into political service in the writings of Gerald of Wales and Gervase of Tilbury. In the hands of encyclopaedists and bestiary writers they were moralized almost beyond recognition. It is not that in the hands of these writers the learned tradition suddenly revealed its ideological capacity. Rather, ideological function is dependent on historical and social context: texts serve different functions at different times, as this book has argued, and in Bodley 614 – as elsewhere – the *Wonders* is ideological insofar as it may be read as an *integumentum* covering the truth of social relations.

The Materiality of Marvels

Perhaps it is time to ask the question that always arises when the monster is discussed seriously (the inevitability of the question a symptom of the deep anxiety about what is and what should be unthinkable, an anxiety that the process of monster theory is destined to raise): Do monsters really exist?

Surely they must, for if they did not, how could we? J.J. COHEN¹

Quid est stultius quam affirmare aliquid esse, quia creator potest illud facere? Facitne quicquid postest? Qui igitur Deum aliquid contra naturam facere dicit, uel sic esse oculis uideat, uel rationem quare hoc sit ostendat, uel utilitatem ad quam hoc sit praetendant. WILLIAM OF CONCHES²

The *Wonders of the East* presents a paradox. There is no such thing as a *donestre*, or a *blemmye*, or a *lertice* – but they do exist. We cannot tell whether medieval readers believed their existence literally; whether their existence was accepted as a possibility, probability, or necessity; whether they were believed in part – a *cynocephalus* being a more convincing proposition than the *homodubius*, naturally, but *panoti* remaining entirely improbable – or whether they were believed as a whole, each wonder silently reinforcing the authority of the next. That wonders existed extra-textually is attested by medieval collections containing unicorn horns or griffin claws alongside religious relics; but the same double-think which knew some relics to be the ‘pigges bones’ of Chaucer’s Pardoner must have operated concerning griffin claws.³ Nevertheless, wonders existed in the things which gave them life: as long as you have griffin claws, you have a griffin; as long as you can depict a *donestre*, there is a *donestre*.

¹ J.J. Cohen, ‘Monster Culture (Seven Theses)’, *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. J.J. Cohen (Minneapolis, MN, 1996), pp. 3–25 (at 20).

² *Guillelmi de Conchis Dragmaticon philosophiae; Summa de philosophia in vulgari*, ed. I. Ronca, L. Badia and J. Pujol, CCCM 152 (Turnhout, 1997), p. 60.

³ On these collections see L. Daston and K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York, NY, 1998), pp. 67–88. On relics, see P. Geary, ‘Sacred Commodities: the Circulation of Medieval Relics’, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 169–91 (at 186). See also the supposed griffin’s claw associated with St Cuthbert reproduced in M. Bagnoli, H.A. Klein, C.G. Mann, and J. Robinson, ed., *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (London, 2011), pp. 229–230.

We *moderni* might be tempted to rewrite William of Conches's question along these lines: 'what is more stupid than to assert that something exists because we are able to imagine it?' But the function of monstrosity – and its closely-related phenomenon, wonder – remains a worthwhile area of study, even if we are less eager than some contemporary theorists to predicate our existence (rhetorically, of course) on the possibilities of our imagination. The wonders of the *Wonders of the East* are indeed real, subsisting in material things and thus having, we might say, a material existence; but they are not *actual*. The paradox of the *Wonders* is that it demonstrates the ambiguous and contingent nature of our relationship to the material world and the artefacts we employ.

If one wonder exemplifies this ambiguous relationship, it is the *donestre*. Should you meet a *donestre* outside of a manuscript book, he will talk to you in a language you understand, tell you the names of your family and friends, then eat you up apart from the head, over which – supper finished – he will then weep. The openings of the Latin versions describe them variously (they are presented here with their original punctuation):

Tiberius B. v, fol. 83r *Itaque insula est in rubro mari · in qua hominum | genus est quod apud nos appellatur donestre | quasi diuine · a capite usque ad umbilicum quasi homines reliquo corpore similitudine humana | natiōnum linguis loquentes*

Bodley 614, fol. 42v *Itaque insula est in rubro mari. in qua hominum | genus est quod apud nos appellatur donestre . quasi diuinum . a capite usque ad umbilicum deformatum | ab hominum specie. reliquo corpore similitudine | existens humana . nascionumque diuersarum | linguis loquuntur.*

The textual differences are not as substantial in the Old English translation, which may be quoted from Orchard's edition:

Donne is sum ealand on ðære Readan Sæ, þær is moncynn þæt is mid us Donestre genemned, þa syndon geweaxene swa frihteras fram ðan heafde oð ðone nafelan, ȝ se oðer dæl byð mannes lice gelic. ȝ hi cunnon eall mennisc gereord.⁴

It may be seen that the scribe of Bodley 614 has tidied the Latin of his exemplar, in which the presence of an unhelpful medial *punctus* separates the adverb

⁴ A. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf'-Manuscript*, rev. ed. (Toronto, 2003), p. 196.

(*diuine*) from the word which sense requires it to qualify (*loquentes*). In Bodley 614, the adverb becomes a noun so that the *donestre* is described as a diviner (*quasi diuinum*). The scribe also eliminated the redundant doubling which – against the evidence of the picture in his source – describes both the top and bottom parts of the body of a *donestre* as human. The Old English translator took a different strategy and resolved the muddle by describing a *donestre* as a creature which has ‘grown like soothsayers from the head to the navel, and the other part is human’.⁵

But what do diviners look like? What features between the head and the naval would distinguish a soothsayer’s torso from its humanoid lower portions? The text gives no guidance; nor, perhaps, should it. There is nothing ‘marvellous’ about foretelling the future: but *diuini*, unlike *prophetæ*, were subject to Biblical prohibition (*ne pythones consulat ne diuinos*; Deut. XVIII.11). The implication of the illustrations, however, is that the text alone is unable to convey its full meaning. Copying Tiberius B. v, the artist of Bodley 614 gives the *donestre* a lion’s head while Vitellius A. xv depicts the head of a dog. Vitellius A. xv and Tiberius B. v have the genitals clearly marked, as if to emphasize the partial humanity of the *donestre* and their wildness in being unclothed; no genitals are visible in Bodley 614.⁶ The conviction of these English manuscripts seems to be that if *donestre* are monstrous, such monstrosity must be registered visually. The mixing of animal and human parts is thereby an index of some other deficiency or excess. And if this monstrosity resides somewhere other than their bodies – which are simply symptoms of something hidden – it must, by default, be in either their knowledge or their actions. Depending on the version, their knowledge is of either many or all human languages (*nascionumque diuersarum linguis loquuntur / 7 hi cunnan eall menisc gereord*). Their actions are fourfold: naming (*appellare/næman*), beguiling (*decipere/beswican*), consuming (*comedere/fretan*) and weeping (*plorare/wepan*).

While the actions of beguiling, consuming and weeping may be deceitful, vile and incomprehensible, it is the *donestre*’s preternatural knowledge of language which earns them the description of *diuinus* and *frihtere*. But unlike Mambres, this ‘divination’ is not sorcery: *donestre* are only *quasi diuinum*. A *donestre* tells the names of a victim and their kin not by magic but by mastery of semiosis which, in this context is demonstrated by the power to name. Naming, however, consists less in the ability to match the linguistic sign with its correct object than to match the object with its linguistic sign as if there

⁵ Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 197.

⁶ There can be no guarantee that the genitals in the various Tiberius B. v illustrations are not later additions to the manuscript.

were a necessary, as opposed to arbitrary, connection between them. No name, and thereby no victim, escapes a creature able to do this. But the mastery does not end here: a *donestre* not only knows the signs of verbal communication but participates in other non-verbal discourses (consumption and grief) by which humans communicate. This is the root and character of their monstrosity, what makes this particular wonder wonderful.

The relationship between the sign and the object which the *donestre* perceives has its parallel in the connection between the *Wonders* and the codices which contain them. The appearance of semiotic mastery is based on an impossible reversal; the manuscripts of the *Wonders* give material presence to things which do not exist. In the end, however, mastery and manuscript are both illusions. There really is no *donestre*; the relationship between linguistic sign and its object is, ultimately, arbitrary.

This book has assumed as an essential part of its methodology that material goods are an integral part of human semiosis. They are used to augment our semiotic capabilities in ways not made possible by other non-verbal means; certain social functions would be impossible without them (there could be no sumptuary code, for example, without first having clothes). But while artefacts expand our semiotic resources they are, like all signs, unstable (in that they require interpretants) and this instability registers a trace in their materiality. Thus it is, that in the weeping *donestre* we find a metaphor for our ambiguous relationship with artefacts. We act, like the *donestre* with its expanded capability and its preference for *blandientes sermones*, and use our goods as blandishments. We beguile ourselves by making signs, which generate other signs, in a permanent regression of ‘successive interpretants’.⁷ So the *donestre* does not consume his victim’s head because he has no need of it. Simply by engaging in the use of signs, there is already an excess – not because of the relation between the sign and the object, but in the sign and the interpretant; and this excess becomes an incomsumable surplus. Thus while artefacts, as signs, may not always achieve the intention of their maker or user, they always signify and this they do in their materiality.

The ambiguity of a *donestre*’s tears is perhaps the most shocking moment of the *Wonders* and forms a useful parallel to the ambiguity of meaning derived through artefacts. A brother at Battle hopes the *Wonders* will help him engage in modes of learning new to the twelfth century; at Christ Church, Canterbury, monks make in Tiberius B. v an object to restore the damage, physical and

⁷ The phrase is C.S. Peirce’s from an encyclopedia entry he wrote at the turn of the twentieth century. See J. Hoopes, ed., *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic by Charles Sanders Peirce* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1991), p. 239.

spiritual, of a violent past; and Vitellius A. xv, a volume written to explore the monstrous from the perspective of rulers, becomes a 'pure point of origin' for an scholarly discipline as it emerges in the nineteenth century.⁸ The study of ancient objects, fraught as it is with methodological difficulties, should not make us weep like the *donestre*, but perhaps it may make us think more carefully about our own use of artefacts. For indeed, it is in our objects that we may see the truth of Marx and Engel's assertion in *The German Ideology*: 'As individuals express their life, so they are'.⁹

Postscript

The manuscripts of the *Wonders of the East* form a discrete group, small enough to be studied with forensic attention to the particularity of each codex. It is reasonable to consider briefly whether the approach taken in this book might usefully be applied to other manuscripts, or groups of manuscripts, or whether its success – if, indeed, the reader considers it successful – depends on having a limited sample. How, for example, would the methodology fare if the manuscripts of the *Liber monstrorum* were studied this way, or the larger group of the *Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian* in its different recensions?

Each manuscript considered in this volume is indicative of a certain 'type'. The origin of Vitellius A. xv is unknown and it does not have any direct relatives. Tiberius B. v might reasonably be assigned an origin, as might Bodley 614. Although Bodley has direct parentage in Tiberius (if the arguments of this book are accepted), the relationship of Tiberius to other *computus* manuscripts can be defined no more closely than family resemblance. It is no grand claim to say that these three codices exemplify the ways in which we must encounter all manuscripts: we either know the origin of a codex, or we do not; if we do not, we must assess the evidence to see whether it can be assigned one. Likewise, we either know a manuscript's exemplar, or we do not; if we do not, we must trace likenesses in other codices and examine *comparanda* to see what might reasonably be inferred from the available evidence. This being the

8 A.J. Frantzen, *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1990), p. 179. The best account of the thematic unity of Vitellius A. xv remains Kathryn Powell's 'Meditating on Men and Monsters: a Reconsideration of the Thematic Unity of the *Beowulf* Manuscript', *RES* n.s. 57 (2006), 1–15.

9 K. Marx and F. Engels, *The German Ideology, Part One; with selections from Parts Two and Three, together with Marx's Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy*, ed. C.J. Arthur (London, 1996), p. 42.

case, it seems to this writer that the methodology used to read the *Wonders* manuscripts might well be applied to other manuscripts and groups of manuscripts.

Put another way, the first impulse of this book was to attend to things in their particularity – or, at least, to attempt to do so. This, of course, introduces the problem of diminishing returns. A small group of three manuscripts allows one to limit the risk; the insights gleaned might justify the labour involved. A larger group means a greater risk: more data, prolonged and perhaps wearying attentiveness contributing to the risk that the insights gleaned may not justify the scholarly labour. Such risks seem unavoidable, although no serious endeavour comes without risk. Whether the approach employed to the study of manuscripts in this book will be profitable in other contexts remains for others to judge. I think it will be worth the risk – the human and the scholarly risk – because risk is what it takes to honour the way that people make their lives.

APPENDIX

Summary Descriptions of the *Wonders* Manuscripts

1 London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A. xv, fols. 94–209

Introductory Bibliography

Leonard E. Boyle, ‘The Nowell Codex and the Poem of *Beowulf*’, *The Dating of ‘Beowulf’*, ed. C. Chase, Toronto OE ser. 6, pp. 23–32; Richard W. Clement, ‘Codicological Considerations in the *Beowulf* Manuscript’, *Essays in Med. Culture: Proc. of the Illinois Med. Assoc.* 1 (1984), 13–27; David N. Dumville, ‘*Beowulf* Come Lately. Some Notes on the Palaeography of the Nowell Codex’, *ASNSL* 225 (1988), 49–63; idem, ‘The *Beowulf*-Manuscript and How Not to Date It’, *Med. Eng. Stud. Newsletter* 39 (1998), 21–7; Johan Gerritsen, ‘British Library ms Cotton Vitellius A. xv – a Supplementary Description’, *ES* 69 (1988), 293–302; N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957); Kevin S. Kiernan, ‘*Beowulf*’ and the ‘*Beowulf*’ Manuscript, rev. ed. (Ann Arbor, MI, 1996; first publ. New Brunswick, NJ, 1981); idem, with Ionut Emil Iacob, *Electronic Beowulf*, 3rd ed. (London, 2011) [1 DVD]; Kemp Malone, ed., *The Nowell Codex: British Museum Cotton Vitellius A. xv, Second MS*, EEMF 12 (Copenhagen, 1963); Elżbieta Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, 900–1066*, SMIBI 2 (London, 1976).

Provenance

Vitellius A. xv is made up of two separate codices, originally bound together in ‘about 1612’ while in the possession of the antiquarian, Sir Robert Cotton (1571–1631).¹ The first codex (s. xii^{med}) comprises fols. 4r–93v, discounting the prefixed leaves before the manuscript proper.² It is known as the ‘Southwick Codex’ from an inscription on fol. 5r showing it once belonged to the priory there.³ The second codex is commonly known as the ‘*Beowulf* manuscript’ after its most famous text. Less commonly it is called the ‘Nowell Codex’ after Laurence Nowell (c. 1510/20–c. 1571), Anglo-Saxonist and collaborator of William Lambarde (1536–1601), whose signature is inscribed on the top of the first surviving page of the codex (fol. 94r).⁴ Nowell gave Lambarde his collection of

1 C.C.G. Tite, *The Manuscript Library of Sir Robert Cotton*, The Panizzi Lectures (London, 1994), p. 13.

2 N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957), p. 279.

3 A description can be found in R. Torkar, ‘Cotton Vitellius A. xv (pt. 1) and the *Legend of St Thomas*’, *ES* 67 (1986), 290–303 (at 291–298).

4 Further information on Nowell can be found in a series of articles from the 1980s: P.M. Black, ‘Some New Light on the Career of Laurence Nowell the Antiquary’, *AntJ* 62 (1982), 116–123;

manuscripts in 1567 and it is possible that Cotton subsequently bought the manuscript from its new owner.⁵

Date: s. x/xi (origin unknown)

Dimensions

parchment (fire-damaged) c. 245 × 185 mm; written area c. 165–180 × 105–120 mm.

Binding and Condition

Vitellius A. xv was badly damaged in a fire at Ashburnham House at Westminster in October 1731. However, it is not listed in the subsequent House of Commons report on the fire as one of the volumes 'destroy'd or injured'.⁶ A report of 1756 for the British Museum, excerpted in Hooper's catalogue, says of the Vitellius manuscripts:

Besides the Damage done by the Fire to the MSS of this Press, it hath suffered no less by the Carelessness of those that have been the first employed in preserving them, as well as by the extraordinary Dampness of the Place. The great Humidity, together with the Extension of the Hue which the Fire extracted from those Volumes wrote on Vellum, having rotted the Edges of most of them, defaced the Marks, and afforded both Lodging and Food to numberless Shoals of Worms and other Insects.⁷

The immediate method of preservation was to disbind wet vellum leaves then press them 'with a clean Flannel' before hanging 'upon Lines, three or four leaves together'; burned vellum leaves, on the other hand, were 'separated with an Ivory Folder' so that

T. Hahn, 'The Identity of the Antiquary Laurence Nowell', *ELN* 20 (1983), 10–18; and C.T. Berkhoult, 'The Pedigree of Laurence Nowell the Antiquary', *ELN* 23 (1985), 15–26.

5 S.E. Smith, 'The Provenance of the *Beowulf* Manuscript', *ANQ* 13.1 (2000), 3–7.

6 House of Commons Committee on the Cottonian Library, *A Report from the Committee Appointed to View the Cottonian Library, and such of the Publick Records of this Kingdom, as they think proper, and to Report to the House the Condition Thereof, together with What They Shall Judge Fit to be Done for the Better Reception, Preservation, and More Convenient Use of the Same* (London, 1732), Appendix B, 1.

7 S. Hooper, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library. To Which are Added, Many Emendations and Additions. With an Appendix, Containing an Account of the Damage Sustained by the Fire in 1731; and also a Catalogue of the Charters Preserved in the same Library* (London 1777), pp. xiii–xiv. The report is printed in full as Appendix 1 by A. Prescott, "Their Present Miserable State of Cremation": the Restoration of the Cotton Library, *Sir Robert Cotton as Collector: Essays on an Early Stuart Courtier and his Legacy*, ed. C. J. Wright (London, 1997), pp. 391–454.

animal fats – ‘the glewy Substance which has been fried out upon the Edges’ – could be ‘taken off by the Fingers carefully’.⁸ It is not possible to determine what parts of this process Vitellius underwent. It is necessary to remember, however, that conservation may account for some of the damage to portions of the manuscript.

The current binding dates from August 1845 and was executed by Henry Gough. Gough was recommended from the Bodleian Library and appointed under by Sir Frederic Madden (1801–1873), who had a low opinion of the work of the Museum’s official binder, Thomas Tuckett.⁹ A full description, including notes on the tooling and cording, has been published by Johan Gerritsen. His observation on the appearance of the book as it is presently is worth quoting.

As a book the volume is a collection of single leaves of thick paper curiously inlaid with charred pieces of inscribed membrane and, it appears, sewn on to guards to make quires. The membrane lies on and slightly overlaps the window edges on the recto; it is held in place by purpose-cut strips of glassy paper stuck on to the recto of the frame.¹⁰

It is not known whether the quiring was lost as a result of the fire or during Gough’s rebinding as no records appear to have been kept.

Collation

1¹⁰, 2⁶, 3⁸ 3 and 6 are half-sheets, 4⁸ 3 and 6 are half-sheets, 5⁸, 6⁸ 3 and 6 are half-sheets, 7⁸ 6 and 6 are half sheets, 8–11⁸, 12–13¹⁰, 14⁸

There have been several foliations of the manuscript.¹¹ The official British Library foliation runs from fol. 96 to fol. 209.

8 House of Commons Committee on the Cottonian Library, p. 12.

9 On Gough, see Prescott, ‘Their Present Miserable State’, p. 410. Kiernan and Gerritsen cite different sources for the date of rebinding (K.S. Kiernan, ‘Beowulf’ and the ‘Beowulf’-Manuscript, rev. ed. (Ann Arbor, MI, 1996), p. 69; and J. Gerritsen, ‘A Reply to Dr Kiernan’s “Footnote”, *ES* 72 (1991), 497–500 at 497–498). The result, however, is the same. The spine and covers of the binding are reproduced in *Electronic Beowulf*. For a general overview of binding at the British Museum, see P. Marks, ‘Binders and Keepers: Thoughts on Bookbinding and the British Museum Library Bindery’, *Bookbinder: Jnl of the Soc. of Bookbinders* 16 (2002), 18–30. It appears that Sir Frederic revised his opinion of both Gough and Tuckett, unfavourably for the former and favourably for the latter (Marks, ‘Binders and Keepers’, p. 20).

10 J. Gerritsen, ‘British Library ms Cotton Vitellius A. xv – a Supplementary Description’, *ES* 69 (1988), 293–302 (at 296).

11 See the detailed discussion in Kiernan, *B&BM*, pp. 85–110.

Contents

fols. 94r–98r: the Old English *Life of St Christopher* (lacking the beginning of the text); fols. 98v–106v: the *Wonders of the East* (illustrated); fols. 107r–131v: Old English version of the *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*; fols. 132r–201v: *Beowulf*; fols. 202r–209v: the Old English poem *Judith* (lacking the beginning of the text).

2 London, BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v, part 1, fols. 2–7, 77–88

Introductory Bibliography

A.N. Doane and Tiffany J. Grade, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts in Microfiche Facsimile, IX. Deluxe and Illustrated Manuscripts containing Technical and Literary Texts* (Tempe, AZ, 2001); D.N. Dumville, ‘The Anglian Collection of Royal Genealogies and Regnal Lists’, *ASE* 5 (1976), 23–50; N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957); P. McGurk, D.N. Dumville, M.R. Godden and A. Knock, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library Cotton Tiberius B.v, Part 1, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Nero D. II*, EEMF 21 (Copenhagen, 1983); Veronica Ortenberg, ‘Archbishop Sigeric’s Journey to Rome in 990’, *ASE* 19 (1990), 197–246; Fritz Saxl and Hans Meier, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters, III. Handschriften in englischen Bibliotheken*, 2 vols. (London, 1953); Elżbieta Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, 900–1066*, SMIBI 2 (London, 1976).

Provenance

Tiberius B. v was at Battle Abbey by 1154–1155, given the evidence of the addition at fol. 88. The ‘Battle Abbey Annals’ (now BL, Cotton Nero D. ii, fols. 238–41 but originally part of Tiberius B. v) suggest that it might have been there earlier because the ‘principle scribe’s last entry seems to have been in the annal for 1119, which is therefore the presumptive approximate date of compilation’.¹² Nothing is known about the provenance of the manuscript after it left Battle until it came into Robert Cotton’s possession, by 1621 at the latest, from the library of John, Lord Lumley (c. 1533–1609). That Cotton rearranged the codex is known from the leaves now in Nero D. ii and from the description of the manuscript in Lumley’s catalogue.¹³ Cotton’s inscription (*Robertus Cotton Bruceus 1598*) is on fol. 2r.

Date: s. xi^{2/4} (?Christ Church, Canterbury)

¹² P. McGurk, D.N. Dumville, M.R. Godden and A. Knock, *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany: British Library Cotton Tiberius B.v, Part 1, together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Nero D. II*, EEMF 21 (Copenhagen, 1983), p. 104.

¹³ S. Jayne and F.R. Johnson, *The Lumley Library: the Catalogue of 1609*, (London, 1956), pp. 162–163.

Dimensions

parchment 250–265 × 205–218 mm. with the exception of fol. 29 (284 × 252 mm.); written area (varies markedly) 205–230 × 175–200 mm.

Binding

Tiberius B. v was damaged in the Ashburnham House fire, albeit not as seriously as Vitellius A. xv. In 1756 it was described, along with five other manuscripts from the same shelf, as ‘still subsisting’.¹⁴ Sir Frederic Madden’s annotated copy of the 1732 Cottonian Committee report notes that Tiberius was ‘inlaid & rebound. 1843’.¹⁵ From his diary and binding ledger, the date may be refined to February of that year.¹⁶ The volume was again rebound and repaired between June and August 1969, the vellum laid in paper mounts bound to guards.¹⁷

Collation

[Nero D. ii leaves], 1⁸, [n missing quires beginning fol. 86–88], 2⁸ missing 8, 3–4⁸, 5⁴⁺¹, 6⁴, 7–8⁸, 9⁴⁺¹, 10–11⁸, 12⁴

There are four foliations, two in ink and two in pencil. The official BL foliation was done when the manuscript was inlaid in the nineteenth-century.

Contents

fol. 2r–19r: *computistica*, comprising texts, tables and charts, with a metrical calendar; fol. 19v–22r: lists of Popes from St Peter to Adrian III (d. 885), of Roman emperors from Julius Caesar to Heraclius (d. 641), of bishops, patriarchs, and the occupants of Anglo-Saxon sees, of kings of England; fol. 22r, col. 4–23v, col. 1: Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies; fol. 23v–24r: the ‘Itinerary of Archbishop Sigeric’, inc. *In nomine domini nostri ihesu christi iohannes rabennati sedit*; fol. 24r–28v: Old English translation of Ælfric’s *De temporibus anni*; fol. 29r: a Macrobian zonal map; fol. 30r–32r: two prayers and a text on the sun and moon, inc. *Domine deus omnipotens sancta trinitas et indivisa unitas*; fol. 32v–49v: Cicero’s *Areatae* (illustrated), inc. *Aries hic existimatur esse*; fol. 56v: a *mappa mundi*; fol. 57r–73r: Priscian’s *Periegesis*, inc. *Nature genitor que mundum*; fol. 55r–56v, 73r+v, 77r: metrical life of St Nicholas (added at Battle Abbey), inc. *In litie fuit quidam Christicola*; fol. 78v–87v: the *Wonders of the East* (illustrated), in Latin and Old

¹⁴ Hooper, *Catalogue*, p. xii.

¹⁵ London, BL, Add. 62572, fol. 13r.

¹⁶ London, BL, Add. 62576, fol. 42r and Add. 62577, fol. 7v.

¹⁷ BL, Department of Manuscripts, Binding Archive. This information was kindly supplied by Ms Jacqui Hunt in a letter of June 2003.

English, inc. *Colonia est initium*; fol. 88r+v, further Old English notes relating to Battle Abbey.¹⁸

3 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 614

Introductory Bibliography

Dieter Blume, Mechthild Haffner and Wolfgang Metzger, *Sternbilder des Mittelalters: Der gemalte Himmel zwischen Wissenschaft und Phantasie. Band I, 800–1200*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 2012); M.R. James, *Marvels of the East: a Full Reproduction of the Three Known Copies, with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford, 1929); C.M. Kauffmann, *Romanesque Manuscripts 1066–1190*, SMIBI 3 (London, 1975); Fritz Saxl and Hans Meier, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters, III. Handschriften in englischen Bibliotheken*, 2 vols. (London, 1953); Fritz Saxl, ‘Illuminated Science Manuscripts in England’, in his *Lectures*, 2 vols. (London, 1957) 1, 96–10.

Provenance

There are ownership inscriptions on the verso of the flyleaf (*Sum Liber Radulphi Hopwoode Astronomie*) and at the top of fol. 2r (*Sum Liber Radulphi Hopwoode*). The binding has the initials ‘W.H.’ stamped on the front and the back. The *Alumni Cantabrigienses* lists a certain Ralph Hopwood (d. 1538) as vicar of Fen Ditton (Cambs.) but it is not possible to make this identification with any certainty.¹⁹ Nothing else is known except that the volume was acquired by Sir Thomas Bodley (1545–1613) and given to the University of Oxford probably between 1605 and 1611.²⁰

Date: s. xii^{med} (?Battle Abbey, Sussex)

¹⁸ From the evidence of the Lumley catalogue, the order of the manuscript before it came to the possession of Robert Cotton may be reconstructed as follows:

- a) London, BL, Cotton Nero D.ii, fols. 238–41: the ‘Battle Abbey Annals’;
- b) fols. 78–88: the *Wonders of the East*, plus the Battle additions;
- c) Hrabanus Maurus, *De laudibus sanctae crucis* (illustrated), now lost;
- d) fols. 2–54: the computistical material, including now-lost map of the heavens which followed the zonal map and preceded the *Aratea*;
- e) fols. 57–73: Priscian’s *Periegesis*;
- f) fols. 55–6: the St Nicholas additions and the world map;
- g) fol. 7: the end portion of the Nicholas additions

¹⁹ J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses: a Biographical List of all Known Students, Graduates and Holders of Office at the University of Cambridge, from the Earliest Times to 1900*, 10 vols. (Cambridge, 1922–1954), II, 407.

²⁰ F. Madden, et al., *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford*, 7 vols. in 8 (Oxford, 1895–1953), II(1), 230.

Dimensions

parchment c. 143 mm. × 100mm.; written area 115–120 mm. × 75 mm.

Binding and Condition

Bodley 614 is in generally good condition. M.R. James considered the binding to be sixteenth-century and the use of initials on the front and back covers is congruent with this.²¹ Furthermore, the stamped cornerpieces are similar in design to some of the tools listed by Ker – for example, his ‘small ornament no. 25’ – which might suggest a binding from some time in the 1530s or 1540s.²² The centrepiece, however, is not identifiable from any of the standard sources. There are four holes, two each on the front and back covers, which would have held ties to close the volume. From the look of what remains, these might well have been green silk. Damage to the corners shows the leather is over paper boards. The quires are sewn on to four primary cords although two additional sewing stations, one at the top and one at the bottom, are visible between the gatherings (e.g. between fols 16 and 17). There is water damage from fol. 17 onwards. The worst cockling is between fols. 27 and 33 but staining is visible from that point to the end of manuscript. This damage appears to have occurred before the current binding since there is no staining on the boards. The present binding has cut the parchment down; there are losses to the marginal notes on fol. 17r and to the illustrations on fols. 20r, 24r and 31r.

Collation

1–2⁸ 2 and 7 are half-sheets; 3⁸; 4¹⁰⁺¹; 5–6⁸

The foliation is i+53, the last two pages being flysheets. There are two foliations, both on the upper right hand side of the recto. A pencil foliation runs consecutively from 1–53. At fol. 17, after the calendar and charts, an ink foliation of earlier date runs from 1–36, including as fol. 36 the first of the end flysheets.

Contents

fol. 1v–2r: *computistica* (table, texts and illustrations); fols. 2v–14r: calendar with facing page illustrations, most likely for a series of labours of the months (incomplete);

²¹ M.R. James, *Marvels of the East: a Full Reproduction of the Three Known Copies, with Introduction and Notes* (Oxford, 1929), p. 6; D. Pearson, *English Bookbinding Styles, 1450–1800: a Handbook* (London and New Castle, DE, 2005), p. 88.

²² N.R. Ker, *Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings, with a Survey of Oxford Binding c. 1515–1620*, Publ. of the Oxford Bibliographical Soc., n.s. 5 (Oxford, 1954), pl. 12; and D. Pearson, ‘*Oxford Bookbinding 1500–1640: including a Supplement to Neil Ker’s Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings*’, Publ. of the Oxford Bibliographical Soc. 3, 3rd ser. (Oxford, 2000), p. 88.

fol. 14v–16v: *computistica* (tables); fol. 17r: *De sole*, inc. *Sol dum igne nature sit*; and *De luna*, inc. *Luna dicta est eo quod a sole lumen accipiat*; fol. 18r–22r/18: *De signis zodiaci*, inc. *Sciendum itaque est in deum ipso firmamento .xii. domicilia*; fol. 22r/19–22v/20: *De VII planetis*, inc. *Inter cēlum & terram certis discreta spaciis*; fol. 22v/21–28: *De interuallis planetarum*, inc. *Interuallum a terra ad lunam musica ratione phytagoras appellat tonum*; fol. 23r: a full-page illustration containing personifications of the seven planets drawn in medallions; fol. 23v–34r: *De signis coeli* (illustrated), inc. *Dvo igitur sunt extremi uertices mundi quos polos appellauiimus*; fol. 34r/1–19: *De cometis*, inc. *Cometes autem latine crinitę uocantur*; fol. 34v: *De ventis* (with an accompanying rota), inc. *Notandum est a quatuor principalibus climatibus cēli .iiii. or principales uentos spirare*; fol. 35r: *Unde coloris in arci celi appareant* (with an unfinished illustration of a rainbow), inc.: *Cum calor solis humorem eleuat*; fol. 35v: On shooting stars, inc.: *In aere uidentur stelle aliquando cadere nulla cadente*; fol. 36r–51v: *De rebus in Oriente mirabilibus* (illustrated), inc.: ‘Colonia [sic] est initium ab antimolima’.

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Index of Subjects

- Ælfheah (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1006–1012) 63
Æthelnoth (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1020–1038) 63
Aldhelm (c. 639–709), Bishop of Sherborne 11, 92, 94, 118
armaria 65–66
- ‘Baldishol Tapestry’ 137 (Fig. 33a), 138
Battle Abbey (Sussex) 5, 112–116, 127–128
‘Bayeux Tapestry’ 19, 24, 31
bestiaries 31, 33–34, 71, 94–95, 138, 142
Biblical apocrypha 100–101
- calendars
 Bodley 614 113–116
 Tiberius B. v 73–83 (Figs. 19–21)
 Julius A. vi 73, 81–83
Canterbury, sack of (1011) 63
Christ Church, Canterbury 5, 60, 61n5,
 63–64, 83–85, 146–147
 manuscripts from 69, 73, 100
Cnut (King of England, 1016–1035) 64, 84
- codicology
 of Bodley 614 105–106
 of Vitellius A. xv 48–59
computus manuscripts 67–70, 87–88
 ‘classic model’ 61–62
Constantinus Africanus (c. 1020–1087) 127
- ‘Dancers of Colbeck’ 120
- Eadwig (scribe) 63–64, 84
Emma (c. 986–1052), consort of Æthelred and Cnut 64
- genealogies 86–87
Gerald of Wales (1146?–1223?) 104, 139, 142
Gervase of Tilbury (d. after 1220) 9, 13, 14,
 104, 142
Goscelin of St-Bertin (c. 1035–c. 1107) 120
- habitus* 3–5, 90, 101
Hjaðningavíg 138–139
horses of Phoebus 116–117
- ‘Icelandic *Physiologus*’ 19–35
ideology 85, 86–87, 104, 128, 129, 130,
 131, 142
integumenta 103, 135–135, 139, 142
- ‘Labours of the months’ 73ff., 104
lectio divina 65–67, 83
Lanfranc (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1070–1089) 65
Lyfing (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1013–1020) 63
- manuscripts
 Aberdeen, University Library, 24 95
 Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum,
 M. 16.2 66
 Baltimore, Walters Art Museum,
 W. 73 133
 Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 318 33n37
 Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale
 10074 33n37
 14562 14
 Cairo, Coptic Museum Manuscripts
 Library, 6614 5n14
 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
 2 132n86
 183 64, 86n84
 291 61, 69
 Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, 254
 27n23, 34
 Cambridge, King’s College 19 132n86
 Cambridge, St John’s College A. 22 67
 Cambridge, Trinity College
 B. 3. 5 95n126
 O. 5. 8 132n86
 R. 5. 22 44–48
 R. 14. 9 34
 R. 15. 32 69–70, 87n89, 88
 Cambridge, University Library
 Ff 1. 23 41
 Gg 4. 28 95n126
 Gg 5. 35 92
 Ii 1. 33 118n48
 Kk 3. 18 35
 Kk 3. 21 117n43

- Kk 4. 25 28n28, 34
 Kk 5. 32 68n39
 Cava, Archivio della Badia Santissima
 Trinità, 3 13n30
 Dorchester, Dorset Record Office,
 D. 124 40n58
 Dublin, Trinity College 58 5n15
 Durham, Cathedral Library,
 B. II. 9 95n126
 Erfurt, Universitätsbibliothek,
 Dep. Efr. CA. Q. 23
 (*olim* Erfurt, Wissenschaftliche
 Allgemeinbibliothek, Amploniana
 Q. 23) 121n61
 Exeter, Dean and Chapter Library
 3501 34n38
 3507 69n41
 Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana,
 Amiatino 1 66
 Hanover, Kestner-Museum,
 WM xxIa, 36 63n15
 Hanover, Niedersächsische
 Landesbibliothek, IV. 394 121n61
 Hereford, Cathedral Library, P. 7. vi 118
 Klagenfurt, Landesarchiv,
 Cod. GV 6/19 34n38
 Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit
 Voss Lat. F. 4 9n14
 Voss. Lat. Oct. 60 15n40
 London, British Library
 Add. 22719 127n67
 Add. 23211 68n38
 Add. 32246 66
 Add. 62572 153n15
 Add. 62576 153n16
 Add. 62577 153n16
 Add. 89000 (*olim* Loan 74) 5n14
 Arundel 377 118n46
 Cotton Caligula A. xv 69–70
 Cotton Ch. Aug. ii. 2 45
 Cotton Claudius A. iii 83n68
 Cotton Cleopatra A. iii 92n109
 Cotton Cleopatra A. vii 69n41
 Cotton Domitian i 69n42
 Cotton Domitian ii 127n67
 Cotton Galba A. xiv 69–70, 88
 Cotton Galba A. xviii 31
 Cotton Julius A. vi 73–83
 Cotton Nero A. ii 69–70
 Cotton Nero D. ii 113, 114 (Fig. 25),
 115 (Fig. 26)
 Cotton Nero D. iv 5n15
 Cotton Tiberius C. ii 92n109
 Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii 69–70,
 88
 Cotton Vespasian B. vi 86n84
 Cotton Vitellius A. xii 69–70
 Cotton Vitellius C. viii 68n38
 Egerton 3314 69–70
 Harley 603 100
 Harley 647 9n14, 19n15
 Harley 2110 35
 Harley 2506 9n14
 Harley 3271 69n41
 Harley 3376 92n109
 Harley 5431 68n39
 Harley Charter 43, C. 2 40n58
 Lansdowne 381 73n55
 Landsowne 383 73n55
 Royal 1 D. ix 84
 Royal 4 C. xi 127n67
 Royal 8 C. iii 72n51
 Royal 12 C. xix 31, 33
 Royal 12 C. xxiii 94
 Royal 12 D. iv 69–70, 85n78
 Royal 12 F. ii 67
 Royal 15 B. xix 15n40
 Sloane 1619 68n38
 Stowe 2 92
 Stowe Charter 28 40
 London, Dean and Chapter of
 Westminster Abbey, 22 27
 Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum
 100 (*olim* Alnwick, Library of
 the Duke of Northumberland,
 447) 31, 33
 Ludwig xv 4 (*olim* London,
 Sion College Arc. L. 40.2/
 L. 28) 34
 Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, 19
 (*olim* A. 16) 13n30
 Monte Cassino, Archivio dell'Abbazia,
 391 13n30
 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek,
 clm 17195 34n38
 New York, Pierpont Morgan Library
 906 15n40
 M. 81 33n34

- manuscripts (cont.)
 Oxford, Bodleian Library
 Ashmole 328 68n40
 Bodley 354 118
 Bodley 572 39n53
 Bodley 724 127n67
 Digby 63 69–70
 Digby 81 68n38
 Digby 83 107, 121–126, 135
 Digby 157 127n67
 e Mus. 26 95n126
 Eng. liturg. e. 3 111n27
 Hatton 113 + 114 68n40
 Hatton 116 118n49
 Junius 11 37
 Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France
 anc. fond. lat. 7418 13n30
 lat. 6503 120
 lat. 7299 68n39
 lat. 8508 117
 nouv. acq. lat. 1065 13
 Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í
 íslenskum fræðum, 673 a, 4°
 (*olim* Copenhagen, Den Arnamag-
 næanske Samling, 673 a,
 4°) 20–24, 34
 Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,
 Vat. Lat. 933 13n32
 Salisbury, Cathedral Library, 150 92
 San Marino, Huntington Library,
 HEH BA v.42/1503 113n32
 St Galen, Stiftsbibliothek, 237 15n40
 Stockholm, Kungliga Bibliotek,
 A. 135 4n12, 63
 Utrecht, Universitätsbibliothek, 32 74n58
 Vienna, Österreichische
 Nationalbibliothek
 Vindobonensis 233 34n38
 Vindobonensis 2721 34n38
 Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek
 Gudianus lat. 148 15n40
 Helmstadt 481 13n32
 Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka,
 IV 8° 11 121n61
 maps, in Tiberius B. v 85
 materiality 1, 3–5, 18, 62
 Orderic Vitalis (1075–c. 1142) 120
 orientalism 89–90, 101–102, 138–139
 palaeography
 grades of script 44–48
 of Bodley 614 107–110, 112–113
 of Vitellius A. xv 35–48
 praxis 89
 psalters 4, 45, 73–75, 85, 92, 100
 Rægenbold (scribe) 70
 Richard of Préaux (d. 1131) 127
 Robert Mannyng (d. ?1338) 120
 scholastic manuscript culture 133–142
 Sigeric (Archbishop of Canterbury, 990–
 994) 61n5, 64, 84
 stone sculpture
 ‘Aycliffe 2’ 21, 24 (Fig. 4)
 ‘Kirkby Stephen 1’ 31, 32 (Fig. 9)
 tapestry, see ‘Bayeux Tapestry’ and ‘Baldishol
 Tapestry’
 thematic unity of Vitellius A. xv 16–17
 ‘Truce of God’ 139
 ‘Twelfth-Century Renaissance’ 128–132
 demographic change 128
 economic development 129–130
 effect on scribes and book
 production 131–132
 Urri (unidentified saint) 119–121, 140
Wonders of the East
 accretions to 90–102, 133–134, 138–142
 as a catalogue 57
 illustrations 18–35, 70–72, 97 (Fig. 23),
 99 (Fig. 24), 106–107, 137 (Fig. 33B),
 141 (Fig. 34)
 mise-en-page 70–72
 Wulfstan II (Bishop of Worcester,
 1062–1095) 68

Index of Ancient and Medieval Authors and Texts

- Ælfric
 De temporibus anni 60, 61n5, 88
 Epistolae 88n91
 Letter to the Monks of Eynsham 65, 67
 Lives of the Saints 118
- Aelian, *De natura animalium* 96n127
- Aldhelm
 Aenigmata 94
 De virginitate 118
- Alexander the Great, literature concerning
 Collatio Alexandri cum Dindimo per litteras facta 12
 Epistola Alexandri ad Aristotelem 11–12, 91
 Letter of Alexander to Aristotle (Old English) 6, 49, 52, 57–59, 91
 ‘Zacher Epitome’ 12
- Alexander Neckam, *De naturis rerum* 10
- Ambrose, *Hexameron* 92
- Apocalypse of Thomas* 118
- Arrian (preserving Megasthenes,
 Indika) 9
- Augustine of Hippo
 De civitate Dei 10–11, 93n117
 De doctrina Christiana 58n111, 72n51, 92
 De magistro 72
 De scriptura sacra speculum 92n111
 De trinitate 71
 Enarrationes in Psalmos 92
 Super epistolas catholicae expositio 92n111
- Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 9n13
- Bartholomeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* 10
- Bede
 De temporum ratione 82, 85n78, 87, 98
 Historia ecclesiastica 4n13, 9n14, 84, 86n83
 In epistulas septem catholicas 92n112
 Vita. S. Cuthberti 64
- Battle Chronicle’ 127
- Benedicti Regula* 65–66
- Beowulf* 6, 16, 17, 39, 48–49, 52–56, 59
- Bernard of Utrecht, *Commentum in Theodulum* 117
- Bernardus Silvestris, *Commentum in De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* 117
- Brunetto Latini, *Tresor* 10
- Byrhtferth of Ramsey, *Enchiridion* 68, 88
- Cicero, *Areata* 60, 61n5, 85, 88
- Ctesias, *Indika* 8, 27
- Cynewulf, *Lives of the Apostles* 118
- De miraculis beati Thomae apostoli* 118–119
- Dialogus de scaccario* 13n83
- Epistola Parmoensis* 14
- Epistola Premonis* 14
- Flores historiarum* 120
- Fulgentius, *Mitologiarum* 117
- Gauthier of Metz, *Image du monde* 10
- Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia imperialia* 9, 13–14, 104, 142
- Gregory the Great, *Cura pastoralis* 93–94
- Haymo of Halberstadt, *Enarratio in duodecim prophetas minores* 92n111
- Honorius Augustodinensis, *Imago mundi* 9
- Horace
 Carmina 91–92
 Sermones 91–92
- Hrabanus Maurus
 Commentariorum in librum sapientiae libri tres 92n111
 De laudibus sanctae crucis 60n2, 83, 101, 103
 De universo 9, 92n111, 95n125
- Hyginus
 De astronomia 135
 Fabulae 117
- Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 9, 58n111, 93, 94, 95, 96, 126, 133, 134
- Jerome, *Commentarii in prophetas minores* 92, 93–95
- John of Worcester, *Chronicle* 84n72

- Joseph of Exeter 174
 Joseph of Exeter (*fl. c. 1180–1194*) 127
Judith (Old English) 6, 49, 56
 Julian of Eclanum, *Tractatus prophetarum Osee, Iohel et Amos* 92n111
- Lactantius, *De ave phoenice* 96
 Lanfranc, *Monastic Constitutions* 65n22
 Leidradus of Lyon, *Epidotae* 92n111
Lepistre le roy Perimenis a lempereur
 (Old French) 14
Letter of Fermes to Hadrian
 (Fermes Letter) 13
Letter of King Feramen to Hadrian
 (Feramen Rex) 13
Letter of Pharasmenes to Hadrian 6, 7–8, 11,
 12–15, 57, 147
Liber monstrorum 8, 11, 15, 19n16, 57, 98, 147
Liber de ortu et obitu patriarcharum 118
Life of St Christopher (Old English) 6, 56, 72
 Lucian, pref. to *Verae historiae* 9n13
- Macrobius
Commentarii in Somnium Scipionis 10, 85
Saturnalia 91
- Martianus Capella, *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae* 10, 85
- Megasthenes, *Indika* 9
 'Miracle of Sardai' 127
- Odo of Cluny, *Collationum libri tres* 92n111
Opusculum de ratione spere 6, 33, 105, 106,
 112, 121–126, 127, 133, 134
- Osburn of Canterbury, *Vita S. Dunstani* 92
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 117
Passio S. Thomae 118
 'Phoenix, The' (Old English) 96–98
- Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople
 (preserving Ctesias, *Indika*) 8, 27n25
 Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis* 9, 27n27,
 91, 93, 96n127, 98, 126
Polyhistor, see Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*
 Pomponius Mela, *De chorographia* 9
 Priscian, *Periegensis* 60, 61n5, 85
 Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermones ad fratres in eremo commorantes* 92n112
 Pseudo-Turpin, *Chronicle* 127
- Regularis concordia* 66–67
 Rufino of Aquileia, *Commentarius in Amos prophetam* 92n111
- Scholia Sangermanensis* 117n43
 Solinus, *Collectanea rerum memorabilium*
 9, 93
 Strabo, *Geographica* 9n13
- Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 92n111
 Thomas of Cantimpré, *Liber de natura rerum* 9, 10n15, 15n40
- Vatican *Mythography* (III) 117
 Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum naturale* 9
 Virgil, *Aenied* 11
- Wace 176
 Wace (c. 1110–after 1174) 127
 William of Conches
De philosophia mundi 105, 110, 116–118,
 126, 127, 136
Dragmaticon 117, 118n46, 136n101, 143
Glosae super Boetium 117n44
 William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum* 120, 140, 141